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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TEN YEAR SKILLS
STRATEGY, WITHIN THE HIGH VALUE ADDED
MANUFACTURING SECTOR, IN WALES AND
THE NORTH WEST OF ENGLAND USING
PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT, AS A
STRATEGIC ENABLER.

A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT CHESTER
BUSINESS SCHOOL.

Andrew Frazer Martin

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University
of Chester for the degree of Master of Business Administration

CHESTER BUSINESS SCHOOL

MAY 2008

Abstract

This study aims to develop research in considering models to understand contemporary thinking on developing long term strategic direction and strategic relationship management. In addition it intends to investigate the current approach to strategic direction through relationship management, within the developing High Value Added Manufacturing Sector Strategy.

The research will then draw conclusions and make recommendations for incorporating strategic direction, and relationship management into the High Value Added Manufacturing Sector strategy in Wales and North West England.

This work is original and has not been submitted previously for any academic purpose. All secondary sources are acknowledged.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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2 Introduction

2.1 Background to Research

Research has shown that the public sector face key challenges in setting long term strategic direction, as globalisation of the environmental factors and demand from citizens to provide more services for fewer resources drive strategic direction (O' Donnell, 2007).

The debate on the development of strategic models has emerged from the work of Mintzberg (Mintzberg, 1973. 1978. 1983. 1990. 1994. Burnes, 2004), and Porter (Porter, 1980. 1986), where consideration of stable or dynamic environments has moved forward to consideration of one of a global environment, within a framework of new emerging technologies that looks to interconnectedness, to deliver the strategic direction required (O' Donnell, 2007).

The debate in strategic partnership has moved from one of developing core relationships, for potential mutual advantage, to a deeper relationship tool (Boguslaw, 2002. Filkin, Allen & Williams, 2001. Balloch & Taylor, 2001). This is required by partners to succeed in the global environment, where in order to achieve strategic goals, citizens, businesses and the public sector must all align to one common vision that delivers for everyone (O Donnell, 2007).

2.2 Broad Research

The research will consider contemporary thinking on developing long term strategic direction, by developing scenarios of future forecasting, linked to environmental changes, and key competitiveness forces. The research will also investigate the models of strategic partnership, against the developing principles, and to consider how the strategy can be developed through strategic partnership in the public private partnership arena.

The research question to be considered is the development of a ten year skills strategy, within the High Value Added Manufacturing Sector, in Wales and the North West of England using partnership management, as a strategic enabler.

The research aims in detail are:

To understand contemporary thinking on developing long term strategic direction and strategic relationship management.

To investigate the current approach to strategic direction through relationship management, within the developing High Value Added Manufacturing Sector Strategy.

To draw conclusions and make recommendations for incorporating strategic direction, and relationship management into the High Value Added Manufacturing Sector strategy based on aims one and two.

2.3 Justification for research

The research area of contemporary thinking on strategic relationship management and contemporary strategic direction is important to consider from an academic view point, as the academic debate needs to develop the concept of linking global environment, and greater partnership relationships into historic and current business models.

The development within the public sector of delivery of services, by key strategic partnership, demonstrates that without a deeper understanding of the delivery model, the public sector may invest public monies without taking real account of global environmental changes, and key competitiveness forces.

2.4 Methodology

Phenomenological approaches have been considered in developing the research models for this research, by developing an interpretivist approach (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007. Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

This research is based on an inductive approach to research, with an empathetic stance which will aim to understand the Weltanschauungen view point of stakeholders, businesses and providers, through developing understanding by clear engagement (Flood & Jackson, 1995. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007. Jankowicz, 2000).

The inductive theory approach will be used to understand stakeholder's contemporary thinking on developing long term strategic direction, and to understand contemporary thinking, on strategic relationship management, based on an interpretivist approach (Fisher, 2007. Sekaran, 2003).

The research will be conducted by firstly reading key literature to gain academic understanding required for inductive research and reflection. Followed by a combination of survey and focus group strategies, including semi structured interviews, focus groups and an international research visit (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

This approach will develop a cross sectional study based on relevant point in time, with key stakeholders (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007. Fisher, 2007).

2.5 Outline of chapters

Literature review

This chapter builds a theoretical foundation upon which the research is based by reviewing the relevant literature to identify research issues

Methodology

This chapter considers the major methodology of phenomenological approaches, to research the contemporary thinking, developed from the literature review.

Findings

This chapter presents the analysis of the collected data

Conclusions and implications

This chapter considers findings for each research objective against prior research, and implications from the data

Recommendations

This chapter presents the final recommendations from the research

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2.6 Definitions

Weltanschauung:

World view; a conception of the course of events in, and of the purpose of, an individual's perspective on how they perceive this world (or part thereof).

Strategic management:

The art and science of formulating, implementing and evaluating cross-functional decisions that will enable an organization to achieve its objectives.

Strategic relationship management /partnership management:

The art and science of formulating, implementing relationships/partnership that will enable organizations to achieve their objectives through common goals or joint visions.

High Value Added Manufacturing Sector:

The manufacturing sector that adds Gross Domestic Value to a region or sub region of the national economy.

Globalisation

Globalisation is the convergence of prices, products, wages, rates of interest and profits towards developed country norms

Global environment

Global environment is the world economic, political and social environment

2.7 Summary

This chapter introduces the broad research problem and the detailed research question.

The chapter then considers the literature review, which justifies the research area; definitions of key areas are presented.

The major methodology of phenomenological approach is briefly described and justified.

The final report is outlined and overall limitations are described.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the review of the literature which is required to understand the theoretical models required to consider the research question in depth.

3.2 Mapping the Literature

The initial broad literature review of the research area considers both contemporary thinking, and past theories on developing long term strategy interventions, by considering literature research of future forecasting, linked to environmental changes and key competitiveness forces. Also the broad literature review considers the models of strategy partnership, against past, developing and future principles, and considers how the strategy can be developed through strategic partnership, in the public private partnership arena.

The broad literature research was through research of journals: *International Journal of Public Sector Management*; *Harvard Business Review*; *Management Today*; industrial journals, including international work relevant to the field of research i.e. Northumberland Business Times and electronic publications such as Direct Gov; PFI online and the internet.

Further broad literature review was gained from such literary publications as; Porter, M. (1998). *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for analysing industries and competitors*; IPPR (2001). *Building Better Partnerships*; Burnes, B. (2004). *Managing Change*; Ringland, G. (2002). *Scenarios in Public Policy*.

3.3 Literature Review Contemporary Research: Background

Contemporary research has shown that the public sector face key challenges, in the setting long term strategic direction, as globalisation of the external environmental factors and demand from citizens to provide more services for fewer resources drive strategic direction (O' Donnell, 2007). In Wales a key difference highlighted in contemporary research in developing strategy, is the collaborative approach to developing services, as compared to the rest of the United Kingdom (Andrews & Martin, 2007).

3.4 Literature Review: Strategy

To consider and understand the current contemporary research considerations, the five definitions of strategy from Mintzberg (1976), were reviewed and considered. This demonstrated that established organisations in stable and predictable industries are more inclined to plan strategic actions (Drew, 2006). When critically reviewed against the current environmental factors such as globalisation, the strategic definition does not meet the recent current thinking of the requirements within the public sector. A further review of Mintzberg considered that an adaptive strategy can be applied more to organisations operating in dynamic industries, where strategic initiatives emerged in response to changing conditions, therefore in part, some of the definitions of strategy by Mintzberg (1976), could be considered within the new globalised environment, however within the limitation that the public sector is traditionally not seen as a dynamic industry (Mintzberg, 1978. 1983. 1990. 1994. Burnes, 2004. Moore & Wen, 2007. Drew, 2006).

The strategic model developed by Mintzberg, demonstrates potential, in consideration of developing a strategic partnership approach, within a changing environment, but consideration of its use in public sector, may be limited to development of one area of his work, within the development of a conceptual model.

Within strategic relationship partnership management, developments have been traditionally through functional, political or social partnerships, which have considered that partnership falls into one of the areas, but cannot stretch across all three considerations (Boguslaw, 2002). The concept that strategic relationship partnership being unable to be considered as having traits of two or more of the partnership descriptors, after critical review, would not match into contemporary considerations within the public sector.

The review of functional strategic partnership management demonstrates that it can be explained as making a contribution to the continuation of society, however

in the ever changing globalised society, this type of partnership can be developed into a workable model, as is it the responsibility of strategic partnerships to ensure social responsibility, in partnership with profit developments.

The area of weakness is that in the public sector we have citizens at the heart of partnership, partners may not, and therefore potentially this approach may in the longer term build conflict within the partnership relationship (Boguslaw, 2002. Galbreath, 2006).

The review of political strategic relationship management considered by Eagan (1998), which involves two or more organisations working together to improve performance through mutual objectives, appears to link into areas where the considered collaborative approach to developing services by strategic partnership of Andrews & Martin (2007), could be developed further. So the potential use of the model could be considered to answer the research question in broad terms, however it would require further expansion to really consider in depth the conceptual model (Filkin, Allen & Williams, 2001. Balloch & Taylor, 2001).

The strategic debate considering future world vision or direction considered by Szarka (2007), would be a future where businesses are so comfortable with the learning environment, that they consider them as an extension of their business. This then considers strategic partnership at the heart of strategic direction which builds upon the work of Porter (1980. 1986). Within this potentially the public sector could develop a viable business community that can remain competitive in a global context, as it considers both partnership and direction by developing an understanding of new ways of considering a global environment. This work could be developed to support the development of a conceptual model, to consider this in the context of the research.

Within the current research within strategic partnerships, a number of policy areas have developed across the public sector, including education, to develop the strategic partnership agenda. However this is against a framework of consideration of value for money, so further critical consideration must be developed (Rom, 2000. Rosenau & Czempiel, 1992. Sparer, 2000).

On critical review, the area of social or cultural strategic relationship management is a process which stakeholders align themselves, to develop new alignment, relations, and understandings (Boguslaw, 2002).

On consideration, this can be expanded to where within this model of stakeholder engagement; it is defined as trust-based collaboration (Andriof & Waddock, 2002). This then provides the cultural engagement for stakeholder thinking, that can lead to strategic competitive advantage. Therefore this links in directly to Andrews & Martin (2007), contemporary thinking and is supported by Foo (2007), in his consideration of achieving strategic advantage by partnership.

Contemporary thinking by the Wales Management Council (2007), considers that developing a model of Partnership Trends/Relationships in future ,requires the following elements; Globalised world, Cross-functionality between organisations, Interdependence, Transnational structures, Focus on innovation and co-creativity and Flat hierarchy, which could provide a key opportunity to develop strategic models of delivery. This when reviewed against the competitive forces model of Porter (1986), demonstrates a potential consideration when developing a conceptual research model, as consideration of the environment and innovation potentially are key drivers.

In developing strategic direction models Porter (Porter, 1979. 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Lagrosen, 2007. Golob & Podnar, 2007), expanded on the developments by Mintzberg (Mintzberg, 1973. 1978. 1983. 1990, 1994. Burnes, 2004), by the consideration that forces driving strategic threat or change could enable established organisations, to consider a range of environmental considerations, that would allow themselves to consider or develop a position at which it could defend, or influence its strategic position in the market (Porter, 1979. 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Beaver, 2007).

On critical review this further expands the strategic thinking into environmental considerations, and positioning within that environment, therefore recognizing that the organization, must consider the greater environment such as globalisation as a key factor in strategic direction or partnership. This links directly into contemporary thinking by O' Donnell (2007), regarding strategic direction in a global environment.

Upon further review Porter (1980. 1986), provides main explanations for the formation of strategic groups, historical developments of a sector, and risk management (Porter 1980. Golob & Podnar, 2007), which when considered against the forces driving the strategic direction demonstrate a potential model of considering strategic direction within the public sector.

Overall after critical reflection, it is clear that Porter (1980. 1986), considered that the forces of change, could be adapted to meet a large number of organisational situations, therefore within the public sector, it would be important to consider these forces of change as a starting point to develop a conceptual model to consider the research question against (Rugman & Hodgetts, 1995).

Within the consideration of strategic stakeholders and direction Schwartz (1996), considers that strategic direction is akin to a myth, where patterns of behaviour, belief and perception that organisations have in common, lead to a greater understanding of strategic understanding (Raspin & Terjesen, 2007).

This does not fit into the structured consideration of Mitzburg (1978), or Porter (1980. 1986), and considers that cultural behaviours may drive strategic direction. Within the public sector, it is considered that strategic direction must be to consider customers and quality at the first point, where as in the commercial developments, other factors such as costs, will play a large consideration. Therefore on reflection this concept of patterns of behaviours, affecting strategic direction, does not match the developing requirements of the public sector (Bishop, Hines & Collins, 2007).

In contemporary thinking about strategic direction in public services Ringland (2002), considers that strategic direction in public services is driven by globalisation, emerging technologies and interconnectedness. This builds upon the work of Porter (1980. 1986,) and demonstrates the move towards contemporary thinking with strategic management theory. Ringland (2002) also considers that organisations cannot have strategic direction without partnerships, which critically demonstrates a considered movement in future consideration within areas such as the public sector is vital (Mohamud, Jennings, Rix & Gold, 2006. Fink, Marr, Siebe & Kuhle, 2005).

However within this developing theory some doubt is expressed, in that within a culturally developing world of constant change, how can a model of future direction be developed? Therefore the model though building on the work of Porter (1980. 1986), leaves a number of key questions to be considered regarding strategic partnership and direction within a global environment of change.

Within the work of Andersen (2004), he considered strategic planning processes as one, that systematically discussed mission and goals, exploring the competitive environment, analyse strategic alternatives, before coordinating actions of implementation. However on reflection this model does not consider strategic partnership and that partners may have common missions, but very different goals.

In addition it implies that co-ordination of actions will occur, through this process. On critical reflection this model appears to be simplistic in its views, in that in a global environment change is constant, and a competitive approach may not be required, but a strategic change in partnership direction. Therefore this model will not deliver the strategic direction required in public services.

A further review of contemporary research by Canton (2007), considers that future global direction will have to consider Fueling the Future, The Innovation Economy, Talent War, Globalisation, Climate Change, and The Individual as key drivers. This model builds upon the work of Porter (1980. 1986), to describe potentially a new element of competitive forces that need to be considered, within strategic direction.

The debate on the development of strategic models has therefore emerged from consideration of stable or dynamic environments, to one of a global environment, within a framework of new emerging technologies that looks to interconnectedness, to deliver the strategic direction required.

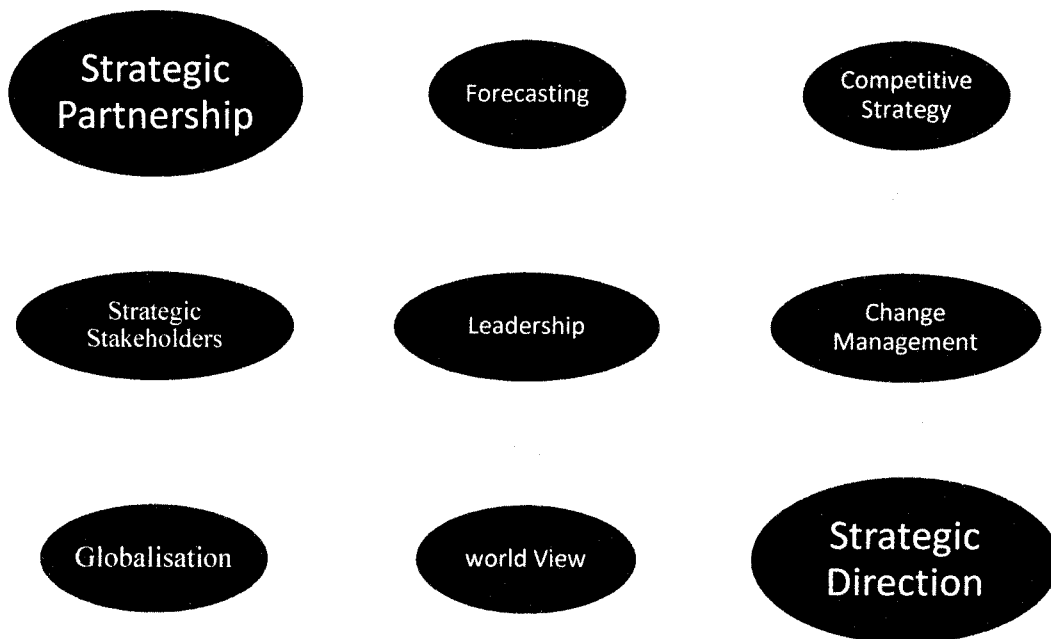
A question however in the developing strategic direction and partnership theory has been raised by the work of Checkland (as cited in Flood & Jackson, 1995) which considers strategy as potentially a problem of a fuzzy nature, where objectives of partners are unclear, and where there may be several different perceptions of the problem, or indeed different *weltanschauung* by the partners (Swan & Khalfan, 2007. Delbridge & Fisher, 2007). Therefore within the consideration of all the models and theories reviewed it is necessary to think of the *weltanschauung* of the partners within the global environment before agreeing a course of action, as unless this has been considered the strategic direction and partnership may appear fine but within months potentially wicked problems may appear for the partnership to try to resolve. Within the conceptual model for understanding the research area, a corner stone will be to understand the *Weltanschauung* position before research is undertaken.

This broad literature review has demonstrated a large number of potential areas for in depth research, as shown below in developing a relevance tree.

3.5 Relevance Tree

Upon critical review and reflection of the literature, a number of broad themes of further potential research were identified. In consideration of developing the inductive approach to research I developed a relevance tree to gain understanding and focus against the research question (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007. Fisher, 2007).

The following key research areas were then developed from the initial broad Literature review, and mapped into a relevance tree, to consider the key emerging themes that required deeper review.



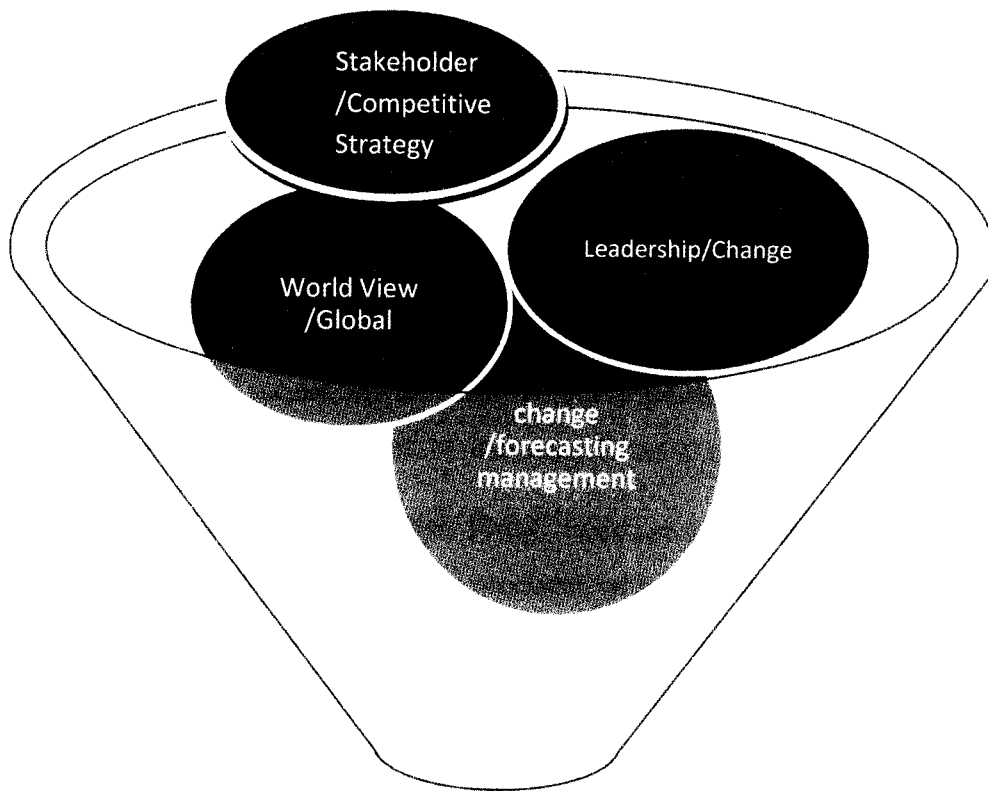
(Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007. Fisher, 2007).

The relevance tree mapping demonstrates the potential complexities and broad key areas of the research. In order to therefore consider the key areas to research in-depth, to answer the research problem, it was a requirement to develop a literature funnel to understand the focus required.

3.6 Literature Funnel

A critical review of the mapped broad subject demonstrated that by considering in detail a number of key theories that match the area of research closely, it is possible to reject areas of broad research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007. Fisher, 2007).

This enabled clarity to be gained in focusing the literature review, against the research question and aims, and further develop the inductive research approach.



Strategic Partnership/Direction

(Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007. Fisher, 2007).

3.7 Strategic Direction and Partnership

In order to critically review the key strategic direction over the next 20 years, the review of literature has demonstrated that it is important to consider key elements of strategic thought, and how that can shape the development of a new strategic direction (Tavakoli & Lawton, 2005. Mukherji & Hurtado, 2001). These should include focus not on resources and delivery, but on strategic direction and partnership, looking at the past and the future, be experimental by considering what if, with every question (Tavakoli & Lawton, 2005. Mukherji & Hurtado, 2001). Porter (1980. 1986), has considered globalisation requires dynamic business models, that are different to address the accelerated growth and unique market forces (Rajshekhhar, Javalgi, Radulovich, Pendleton & Scherer, 2005). A sustainable competitive advantage is derived through considering the risk, and then agreeing the correct strategy, and then by positioning the strategy with strategic partnerships for strategic development or delivery.

The key elements extracted from the review of literature demonstrate that in order to consider in depth the research question, it is necessary to consider linking key elements of theory into a conceptual model for delivery.

Consideration by Porter (1980. 1996), of cost leadership strategy which seeks to achieve above-average returns over competitors through low prices by driving all components of activities towards reducing costs can be linked to O'Donnell (2007) demand from citizens to provide more services for fewer resources. Therefore the conceptual model will examine the development of strategic partnerships, to provide cost reduction, by increased focus in strategic direction.

The differentiation strategy (Porter, 1980. 1996), which aims to build up competitive advantage, by offering unique products, which are characterized by valuable features, such as quality, innovation, and customer service, can be linked to O'Donnell (2007), considered views, to develop quality products which add value and innovation. Therefore the conceptual model will examine the development of strategic partnerships, where customer requirements are developed in response to innovation.

The development of segmentation strategy (Porter, 1980.1996) which aims to develop competitive advantage of selective standardization on a global basis may be strategically advantageous and espouse hybrid strategies of adaptation and globalisation, linked to Mintzberg (1994), O'Donnell (2007) and Ringland (2002) to consider a range of environmental considerations which develops a possible response to investigation of strategic direction and partnership.

Strategic relationship management developed from Mintzberg (1978), O'Donnell (2007), Boguslaw, (2002), and Andrews & Martin (2007), is a process which stakeholders align themselves to develop new alignment, relations, and understandings, which drive competitive advantage. Therefore the conceptual model will examine the development of strategic partnerships by consideration of relationships and understandings.

Global strategy developed from Porter (1986), and Canton (2007), contends that a global strategy has two basic dimensions: configuration of value-adding activities and co-ordination of the activities across markets, linked to new areas of

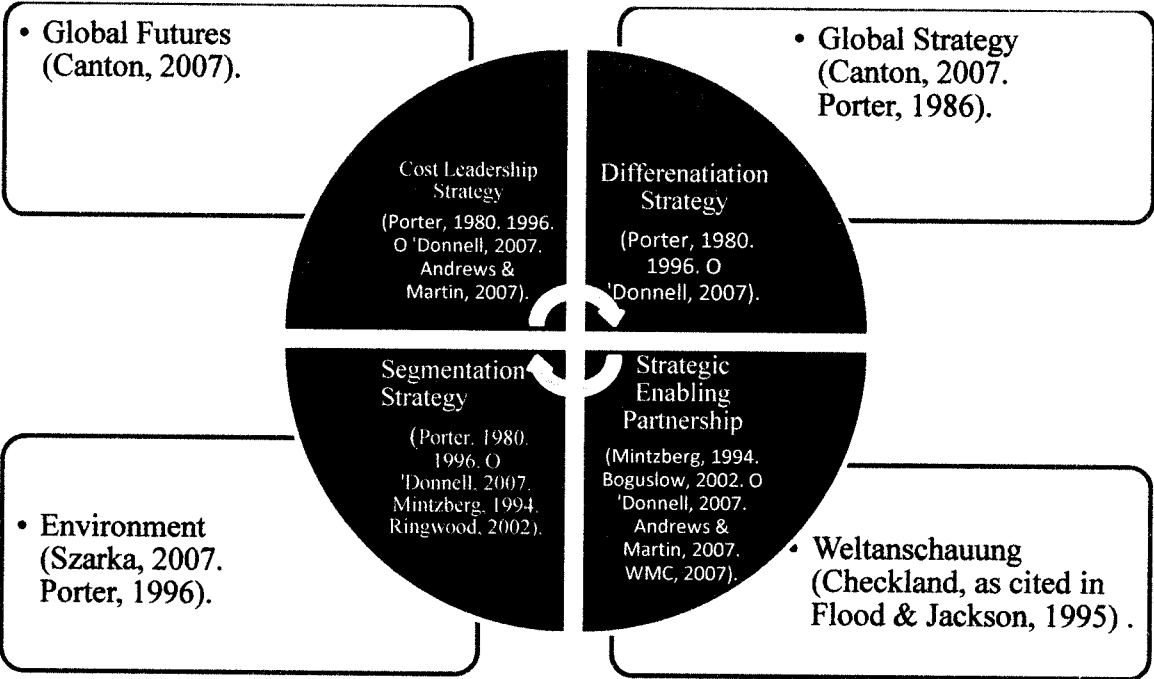
globalisation, which through a conceptual model looks to consider potentially a new element of competitive forces that need to be considered, within strategic direction.

Global futures strategy developed from Canton (2007), is, having predicted the future outcomes which are likely to occur without any intervention, is it possible to influence these outcomes by adopting the optimal pattern of intervention through partnership.

Weltanschauung or world view developed by of the partners within the global environment before agreeing a course of action, is key to developing Checkland (as cited in Flood & Jackson, 1995), the conceptual model, to ensure the core strategic models are considered by understanding the partners views, before review or action.

Global environment developed by Szarka (2007), and reinforced by Porter (1996), looks to develop an understanding of new way of considering a global environment, which then impact on key strategic models within the development of a conceptual model.

3.8 Conceptual model



Through developing a structured approach to research, based on preliminary theory development, the author has considered the development of a conceptual

model. The conceptual model above has been based on consideration and development of the strategic exchange relationship model (Watson, 1994 as cited in Fisher, 2007), which considers the balance of relationships through a mechanism of mutual exchange. The model is also developed by considering the balanced scorecard model, which is an approach to develop a “balanced framework for organizational performance management” (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). The developed conceptual model has therefore taken the balanced equilibrium concept of both models, to ensure a key balance in developing the research methodology, and to answer the research question. The model developed demonstrates a clear equilibrium of exchange between different theories, and provides a clear framework to understand the research question (Fisher, 2007).

The focused literature review, after critical analysis, has demonstrated that in order to research the question fully and provide a balanced view in the research the key areas of Porter’s (1980,1986), competitiveness model, Mintzberg and Boguslaw, strategic partnership, Checkland, (1979), world view, Canton (2007), and Andrews & Martin (2007), environment considerations and O’ Donnell and Szarka (2007), global futures model, need to be considered within the balanced equilibrium model. The conceptual model was then developed, to consider key strategic elements that would develop the understanding of the research questions and aims.

The conceptual model informed the development of the semi structured questionnaire by linking each question back into the model to provide a clear structure for analysis and triangulation of the results.

The focus groups were developed from the semi structured interviews, and were directly linked back to the conceptual model to provide a clear structure for analysis and triangulation of the results. This will allow a clear exploration of the research issues within a controlled academic discussion.

3.9 Summary

This chapter introduces the broad review of literature, against the problem and the detailed research question.

The chapter then considers the literature review, against a relevance tree which justifies the literature area.

The chapter then considers strategic direction and partnership.

The major methodology of the developed conceptual model is briefly described and justified.

4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the major methodology of approaches to research, and the contemporary thinking developed from the literature review.

4.2 Research philosophy and principles

Phenomenological approaches have been considered in developing the research models for this research, by developing an interpretivist approach (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007. Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This approach is required as the research question being “contextually laden, subjective, and richly detailed”, describes the research situation where it is necessary for us to make detailed explanations and interpretations of data that can (and does) hold a myriad of meaning Byrne (2001).

Within qualitative research there is no agreed doctrine underlying qualitative research, however the common element of qualitative research is the collection of data in the form of words and statements, which is analysed by methods that do not include statistics or quantification. (Silverman, 1998). The direct and in-depth knowledge of a research setting is necessary to achieve contextual understanding.

The qualitative research methods developed for this research are “face-to-face” contact with people in the research setting, together with verbal data and observations.

4.3 Methodological Consideration

Through consideration of the “research onion” Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, (2007), and critical review of the interpretivist approach, I developed a qualitative research model. This is to ensure that the research could be triangulated back against the literature review, the developed conceptual model and each stage of investigation. Therefore the research strategy developed into a combination of survey and focus group strategies, which were selected as the most appropriate to answer this research question (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). This approach will develop a cross sectional study, based on relevant point in time, with key stakeholders (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007. Fisher, 2007). Within this

approach I have considered the four key principles of qualitative research, and tested the developed model against the following four principles.

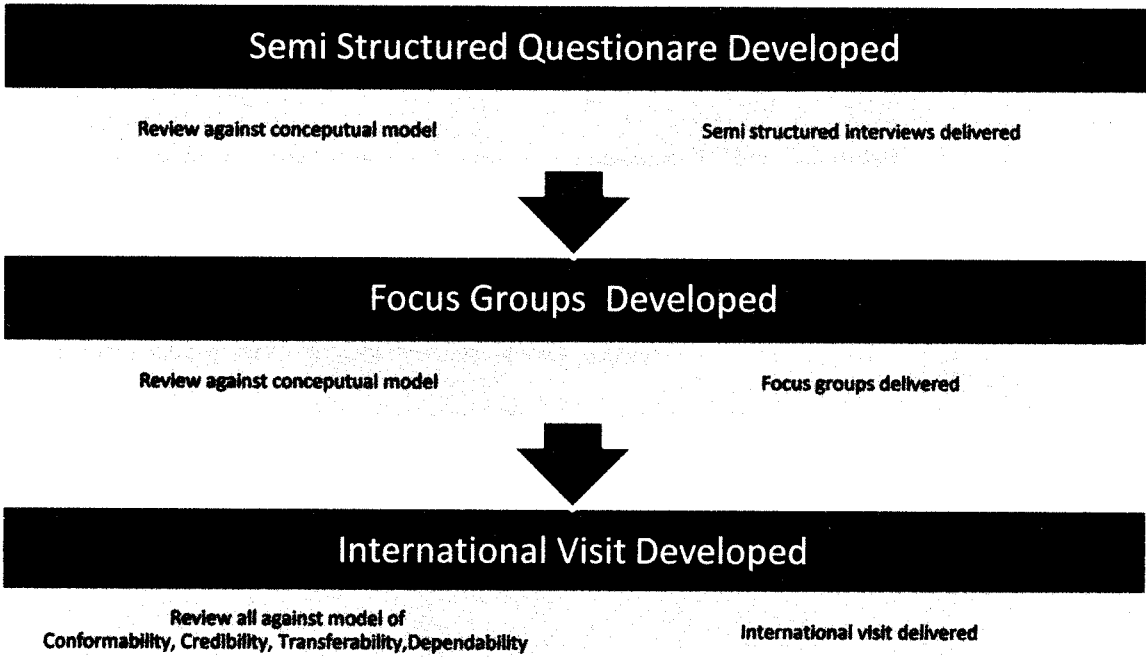
Conformability is the notion of neutrality and objective positivism, corresponding closely to construct validity. Conformability assesses whether the interpretation of data is drawn in a logical and unprejudiced manner.

Credibility is the key to develop internal validity. It involves the approval of research findings by either interviewees or peers as realities may be interpreted in multiple ways. The purpose of this is to demonstrate that the research was carried out in a way which ensures credibility

Transferability is the key to develop external validity in quantitative research. This is achieved when the research shows similar or different findings of a phenomenon amongst similar or different respondents or organisations that is achieving analytical generalization.

Dependability is analogous to the notion of reliability in quantitative research. The purpose of this test is to show indications of stability and consistency in the process of inquiry. The underlying issue here is whether the procedures or techniques used in the process of study are consistent.

Model of Qualitative Research



4.4 Ethical considerations

In the initial stages of clarifying the research question and gaining consent, ethical consideration was given to the design of questionnaire, confidential information, collecting and storage of data, processing of data, and results analysis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

Written consent was gained from the Head of Skills Business and Employability, after all ethic considerations had been fully discussed.

The questionnaire and focus group invitees were sent a full outline of the research to be undertaken, which included the opportunity to decline or ask any questions regarding the research, and any ethical concerns.

At each interview, a copy of the questions, with the background research question were provided to each interviewee, and each interview was started with an ethical conversation, including in particular confidentiality, and results storage. At the conclusion of each interview, participants were asked to review the notes taken, and add or change any parts.

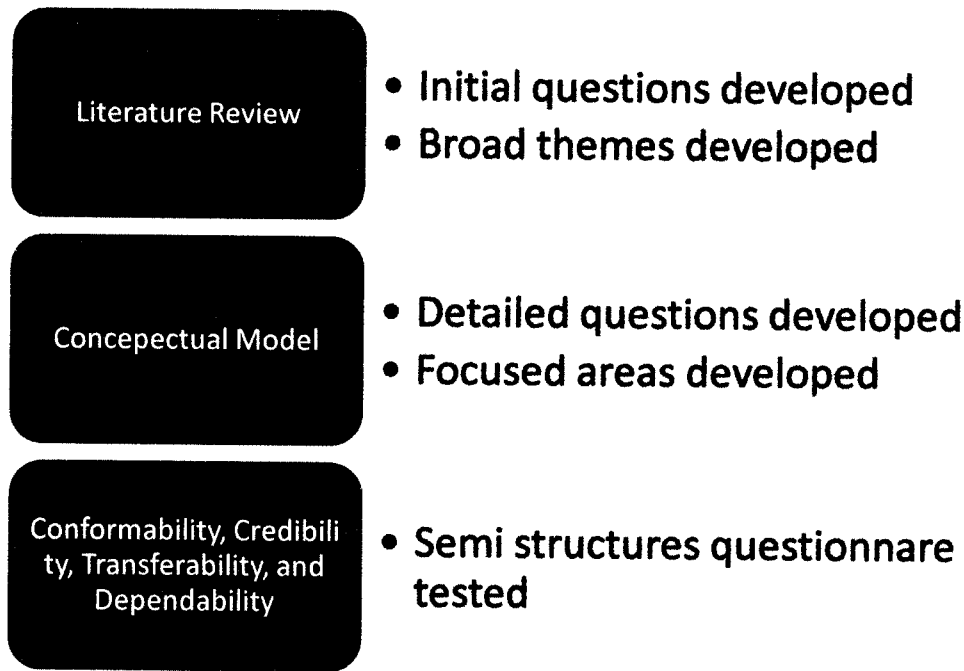
In the focus groups before any discussion took place, each person was given an opportunity to introduce themselves, and ethical boundaries were established, including note taking and recording of discussions. At the end of the focus group, participants were sent a full unedited copy of the recording transcript, with the opportunity to feedback any comments for clarification.

The data storage and analysis were conducted against Welsh Assembly Records management procedures (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007), which drives public standards in research.

4.5 Semi structured interviews design and development

The research objective and aims were considered in depth against the literature review. This developed the concepts and broad considerations into initial questions, to be used as a template in the semi structured interviews.

The semi structured interview questions were then developed against the designed conceptual model theories, and tested against the model of Conformability, Credibility, Transferability, and Dependability.



Questions Developed

Please explain your current role and position, including company details:

Please take a minute, to consider and list the top three High value added technologies or industries that you consider, will be vital to global success for the Welsh economy in the year 2020. *(This question is to consider Global strategy developed from Porter (1986), and Canton (2007), and Global Futures developed from Canton (2007)).*

Why did you choose your number one? Was it evidenced based or just you're considered vision of the future? *(This question is to consider and understand partners Weltanschauung or world view developed from Checkland (Flood & Jackson, 1995)).*

Please consider and list the top five skills or knowledge, that you consider the current workforce will have to develop in order to complete in the future jobs market. *(This question has been constructed to consider Global strategy developed from Porter (1986), and Canton (2007), and Global Futures developed from Canton (2007).*

Taking into account your choices to date, of industries and skills, what type of package of learning would you consider that Wales should consider in order to deliver learning: *(This question has been constructed to consider Global strategy developed from Porter (1986), and Canton (2007), and Global Futures developed from Canton (2007).*

a) Offer a standardized skills package at a low cost and made available to a very large customer base *(This question has been constructed to consider Cost Leadership Strategy developed from Porter (1980. 1996), and O 'Donnell (2007).*

b) Offer a specific highly focused skills package that is perceived as unique to Wales within the Global economy *(This question has been constructed to consider Differentiation Strategy developed from Porter (1980. 1996), and O 'Donnell (2007).*

c) Offer targeted skills or focused skills package in a number of key niche industries *(This question has been constructed to consider Segmentation Strategy developed from Porter (1980. 1986), Mintzberg (1994), O 'Donnell (2007), and Ringland (2002).*

Global Vision

The following questions have been constructed to consider Global strategy developed from Porter (1986), and Canton (2007), and Global Futures developed from Canton (2007).

Please consider the following visions of the future, and after consideration please rate each the statement 5 fully agree to 1 no agreement.

The future learning programmes must contain active learning and pure research, or the vision of a knowledge based global world will not be achieved (Alarcon, 2007).

To create Human Knowledge for global success by developing educational partnerships (Molinaro, Matthews, Lague & Lane, 2007).

Using partners with diverse skills to deliver in the global economy (ETOP, 2007).

To develop a strategic plan and global leadership in enabling technologies (Hull, 2007).

Future world vision would be a place where manufactures are so comfortable with the university or college, that they drop in for a coffee, drop into labs for a chat or just see students. This would give us a viable business community that can remain competitive in a global context, with education seen as integral in that vision (Szarka, 2007).

Vision of a highly qualified technology driven workforce, in key businesses areas, was key to the success of a knowledge based economy (Shore, 2007)

Looking at your top choice of vision, why did you chose it, and how or would you improve it?

Partnership

This Section has been constructed to consider Strategic relationship management developed from Mintzberg (1994). O 'Donnell (2007). Boguslaw (2002). and Andrews & Martin (2007).

Do you consider “real” partnership as a potential vehicle to deliver the developed skills strategy of the future? If yes: Who do you consider to be the key partners, to develop a strategic relationship with to achieve the future vision of HVA manufacturing skills?

If no: What or how do you think the strategy can be delivered?

As the current suppliers of learning are well established within the market place, and the cost of entry in terms of provision and quality remain high, do you consider that partnership management as a strategic enabler may help bring in new and improved delivery?

The current and future overall market place for learning has been distorted by EU funding, and the developing grants mentality. Could partnership management as a strategic enabler; help bring in new and improved delivery into the agreed strategy?

The threat of additional new entrants to deliver into an emerging strategy is high, due to the relaxation of EU borders and business controls. Could this be strategic enabler for change through partnership?

The future threat from substitutes learning services exists if there are alternative products with lower prices of better performance parameters for the same purpose. They could potentially alter a significant proportion of current market base. However could this be a model of delivery that adds real value but with no or little partnership?

Could you define your considered view of what key elements / drivers would constitute a strategic enabling partnership?

The section below has been constructed to consider Strategic relationship management developed from Mintzberg (1994), O' Donnell (2007), Boguslaw (2002), and Andrews & Martin (2007). The section also considers Global environment developed from Szarka, (2007), and Porter (1996).

Please consider the following possible Partnership Trends/Relationships in future, in relation to HVA manufacturing and rank them in importance, 5 very important to 1 not important

Globalised world - multi-cultural multi-lingual working, across borders.

Cross-functionality between orgs - interdisciplinary teams, matrix management.

Interdependence - no isolated solutions, holistic approach.

Transnational structures - cross-accountabilities.

Focus on innovation and co - creativity.

Flat hierarchy - no authority, democratic or consensus driven.

(Wales Management Council, 2006).

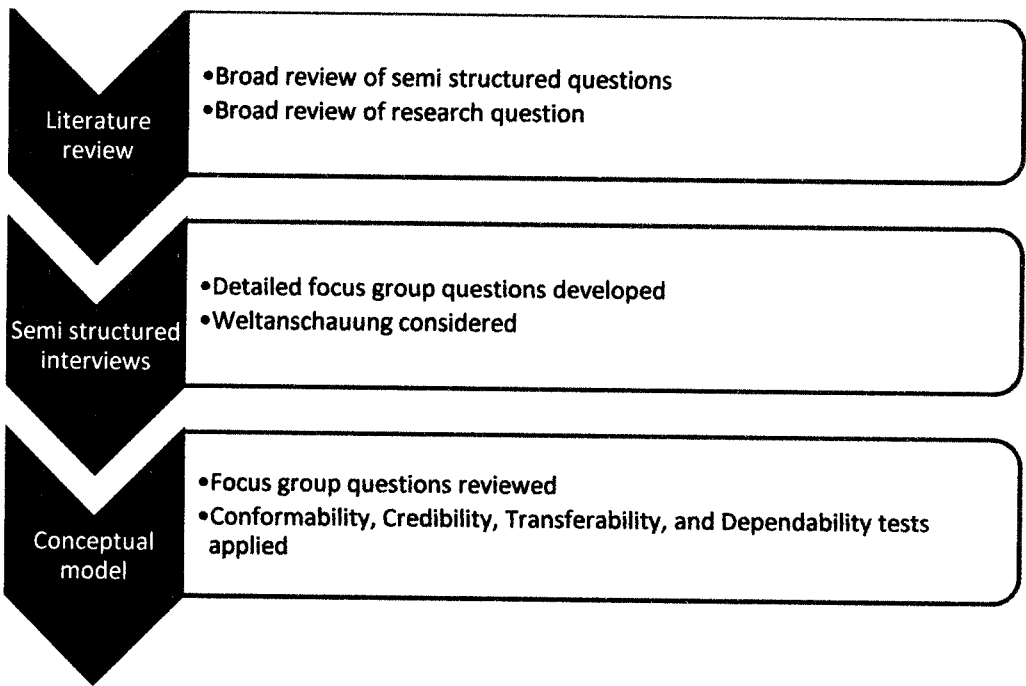
4.6 Focus Groups Design and Development

The focus groups were initially considered against the broad research question and literature review. From this initial research, consideration was given to the semi structured interviews, that had been conducted, and the profile of participants, that would be engaged in the process.

The focus groups were then developed around the conceptual model and in particular understanding of partners Weltanschauung (as cited in Flood & Jackson, 1995).

This was to ensure triangulation of results, could take place during the evaluation phase.

Model of Focus Group Development



The focus group key themes through questions and debate focused on:

Strategic Direction

Please take a minute, to consider and list the top three High value added technologies or industries that you consider will be vital to global success for the Welsh economy in the year 2020. *(This question is to consider Global strategy developed from Porter (1986), and Global Futures developed from Canton (2007).*

Please consider and list the top five skills or knowledge, that you consider the current workforce will have to develop in order to complete in the future jobs market. *(This question has been constructed to consider Global strategy developed from Porter (1986), and Global Futures developed from Canton (2007).*

Taking into account your choices to date, of industries and skills, what type of package of learning would you consider that Wales should consider in order to deliver learning? *(This question has been constructed to consider Global strategy developed from Porter (1986), and Global Futures developed from Canton (2007).*

Strategic Partnership

Do you consider “real” partnership as a potential vehicle to deliver the developed skills strategy of the future? If yes/no: Who do you consider to be the key partners, to develop a strategic relationship with to achieve the future vision of HVA manufacturing skills. *(This Section has been constructed to consider Strategic relationship management developed from Mintzberg (1994), O’ Donnell (2007), Boguslaw (2002), and Andrews & Martin (2007).*

Please consider the possible Partnership Trends/Relationships in future; in relation to HVA manufacturing *(This section has been constructed to consider Strategic relationship management developed from Mintzberg (1994), O Donnell (2007), Boguslaw (2002), and Andrews & Martin (2007). The section also considers Global environment developed by Szarka (2007) and reinforced by Porter (1996).*

The questions developed were designed to be posed through a semi structured focus group, allowing natural debate, but controlled back to the research question.

4.7 International Visit Design and Development

An international exchange of knowledge visit was arranged, to consider key questions of strategy developed through partnership in a global environment. The visit was developed around the emerging technology sector in Canada, and the future forecasting business models that are being developed in Ottawa. Canada was chosen as having a clear business focus like Wales, in emerging technologies, and also with a similar skill levels. The interviews and discussions were also based around the developed conceptual model to develop thinking about global trends and also, to test out the semi structured interview questions.

4.8 Semi structured interviews procedures

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken to allow the researcher to access the data most important to the individual, and to establish their Weltanschauung views of the research question (Bryman, 1988. Flood & Jackson, 1995).

During the development of the conceptual model, a range of interviewees were mapped out against the research question. The criteria developed for selection of the interviewees to assist in considering the research question, was to develop key impact or questioning individuals who met an agreed profile.

The profile developed from the research question, and the conceptual model was that the research required input from, large impact industries, small but emerging businesses, education sector, future strategists, global thinkers and the government policy sector. This criterion could cause selection bias, but a wide variation in organizational size, and sector spreading was obtained. All areas selected were well established. None of the selected institutions declined to participate

This was implemented in a semi-structured interview, and conducted in a face-to-face setting; most responders were members of executive management.

Detailed invitations were sent to each person, with a full explanation of the purpose of the study, and background to the research, to allow for full engagement by the interviewees.

The interviews were scheduled over a period of six weeks, and were held in private. The interviews took two hours, and followed the model of semi structured interviews, with notes being taken throughout the interview.

As some very large businesses and sector forums were included, almost 50 per cent of the business sector volume of the HVA sector was covered. Because of the relatively low number of responders, only direct counting and simple percentages were used for statistics.

4.9 Focus Group Procedures

The focus group criteria for inviting key participants was developed, on the same basis as the semi structured interviews, so ensuring triangulation of results to be clearly defined. A detailed invite was sent to each individual, with a full background briefing, to explain the purpose of the events. The event was timed to run from 9.30 to 12.30, and was held in a quiet location. The author led the event, which was based around the semi structured questionnaire, and the focus group questions developed. The event allowed key discussion time, with sub groups to consider key areas of thought, with further feedback and ongoing discussion. Each event was recorded, and transcripts were provided to all attendees.

4.10 International visit Procedures

The visit to Canada combined both semi structured interview, a conference visit (for background information), and visits to emerging technology parks. The conference visit to ETOP 2007, was planned to understand emerging science and other emerging technologies. The semi structured interviews were conducted with Toronto University and Ontario futures, to understand the potential global differences to be considered, in developing considerations for a global partnership model.

4.11 Procedures for triangulation of results

During each stage of development and during the semi structured interview, international visits and focus groups, a review and reflection process were deployed, to ensure the results were clear and constant, with a clear link back to the conceptual model.

4.12 Summary

This chapter introduces the major methodology of phenomenology, approaches to research, and the contemporary thinking developed from the literature review.

The chapter then considers the design of the methodology development, against the developed conceptual model which, justifies the methodology used.

The chapter then considers the process of actual research undertaken.

5 Results of Data and Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the patterns of results, and analyses against the research methodology deployed, the questions engaged, and the broad research question. The chapter sets out the results that are then discussed in depth in Chapter five.

5.2 Application of Methodology

The results were gained firstly through semi structured interviews, against an agreed profile of types of organisations and executive management, which included required input from large impact industries, small but emerging businesses, education sector, future strategists, global thinkers and the government policy sector (*See Appendix 1*). Within the semi structured interviews large businesses and sector forums were included; therefore almost 50 per cent of the business sector volume of the HVA sector was covered. Because of the relatively low number of interviewees only direct counting and simple percentages were used for statistics.

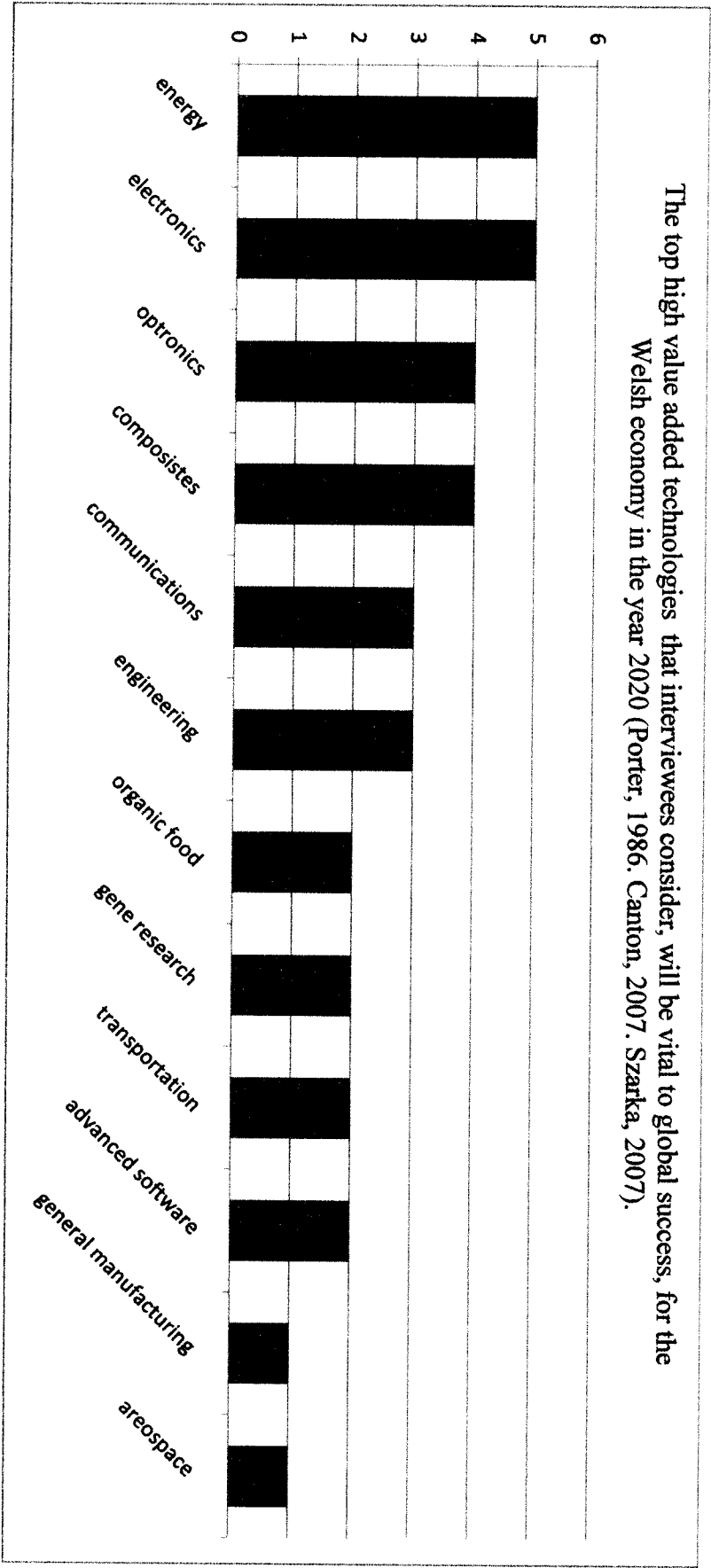
The further results were gained from focus groups looking at developed questions from the broad research question, the conceptual model and the semi structured interviews, the focus group criteria for inviting key participants was developed, on the same basis as the semi structured interviews, so ensuring triangulation of results to be clearly defined. No ethical concerns were raised during the conducting of the actual research methodology.

5.3 Semi Structured Interviews findings

Findings from each of the semi structured interviews were collated by individual questions.

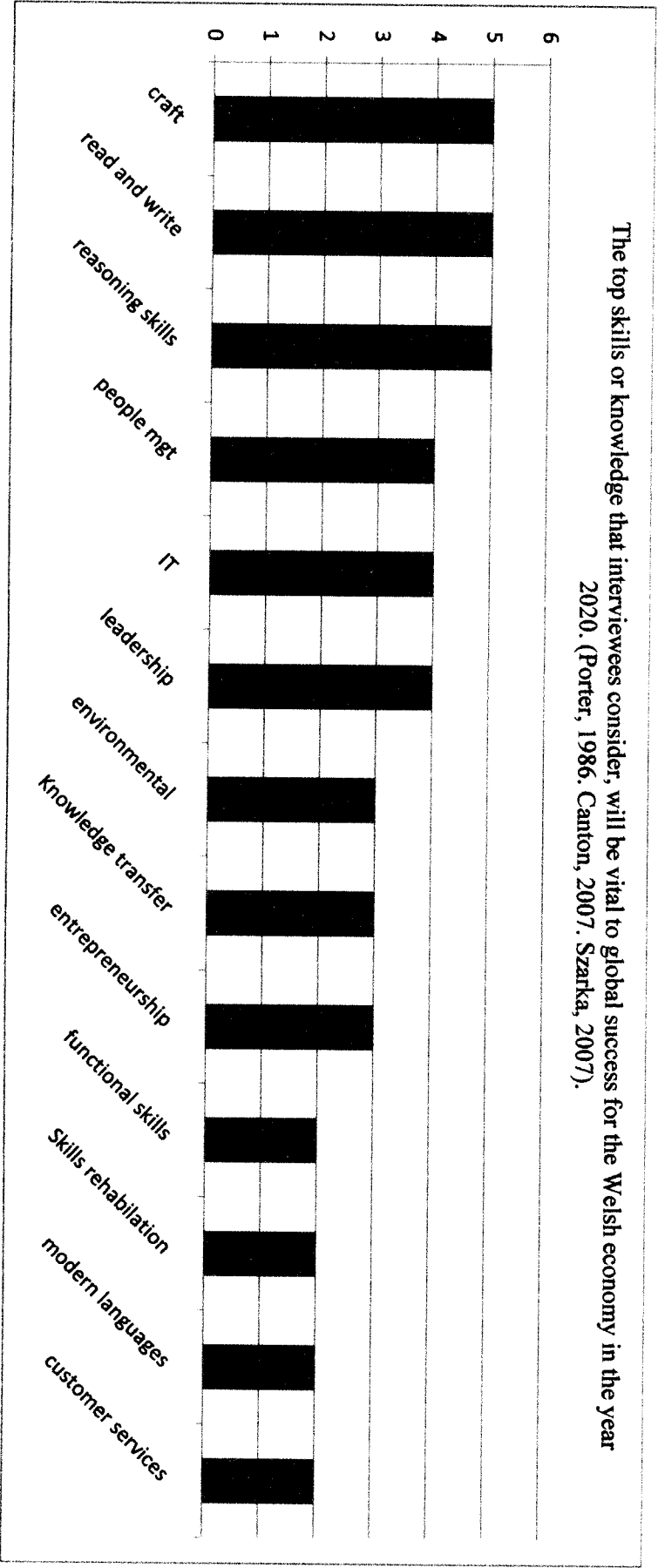
The individual question results were then transferred into data tables, at which point a universal ranking system was deployed for all the research. The ranking system used was: a score of 5 being the top ranking, to 1 as being the least rank. The collated scores were then transferred into charts, and graphs to express the results.

This graph demonstrates the results of the semi structured interviewees considered views of the future forecast of the High Value Added Industries, which will be important to economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (Porter, 1986. Canton, 2007. Szarka, 2007).



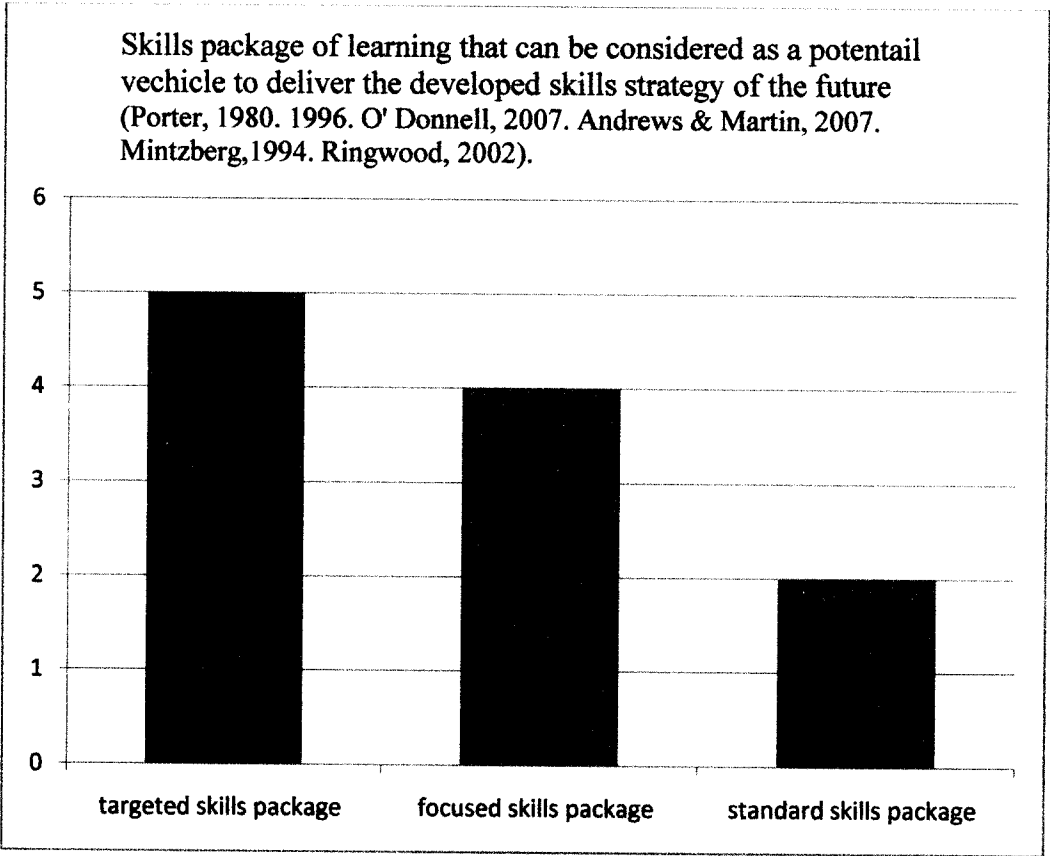
The semi structured interview results from the fourteen interviewees were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to reflect the likelihood of the industries becoming vital to global success, for the Welsh economy in the year 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates that an industry would not be vital at all in the Welsh Economy, whilst a score of 5 indicates the highest probability of the industry being vital to the Welsh Economy.

This graph demonstrates the results of the semi structured interviewees considered views of the future forecast of the top skills or knowledge, which will be important to economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (Porter, 1986. Canton, 2007. Szarka, 2007).



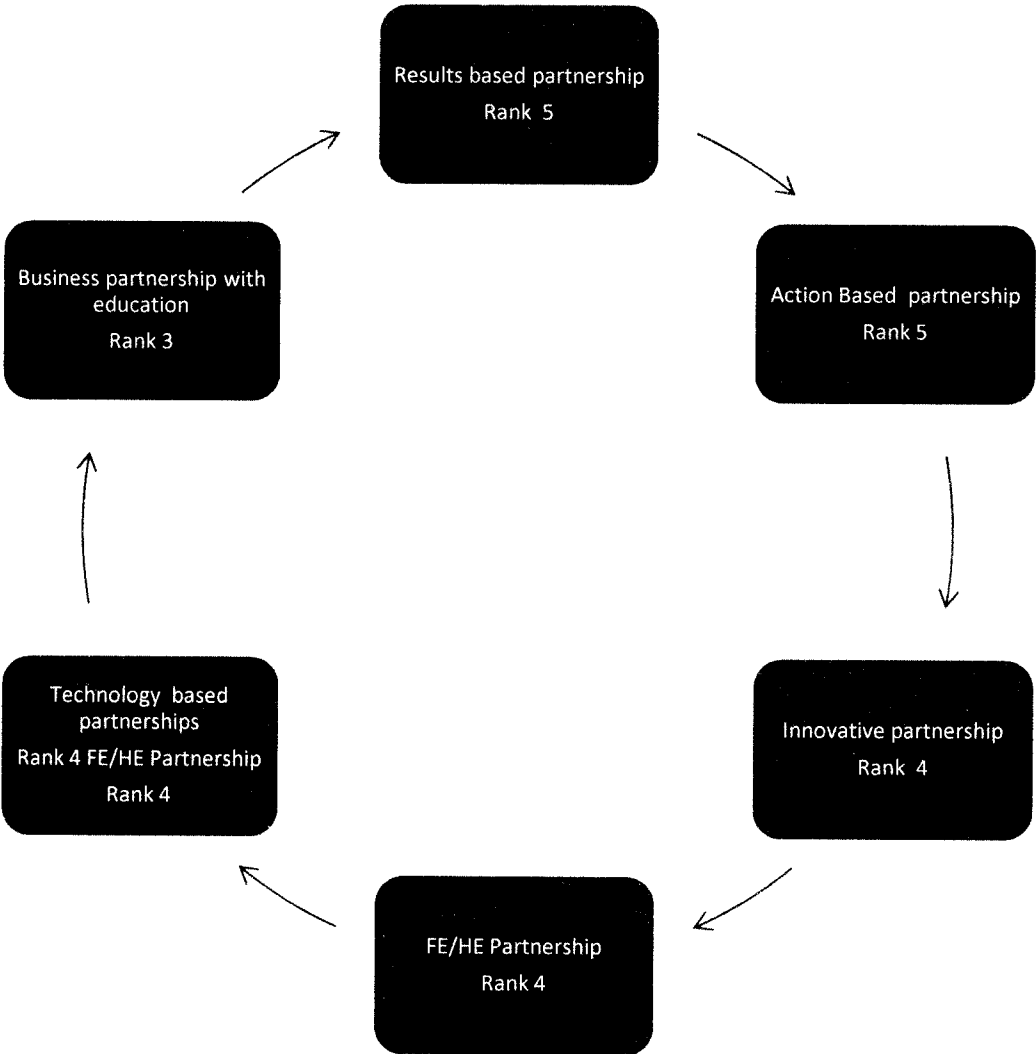
The semi structured interview results from the fourteen interviewees were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to reflect the top skills or knowledge which will be important to economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates the skills or knowledge that would not be vital at all in the Welsh Economy, whilst a score of 5 indicates the highest probability of the skills or knowledge being vital to the Welsh Economy.

This graph demonstrates the results of the semi structured interviewees considered views of the types of forecasted skills packages (Targeted skills, Standard skills, Focused skills), which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (Porter, 1980. 1996. O ‘Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. Mintzberg, 1994. Ringwood, 2002).



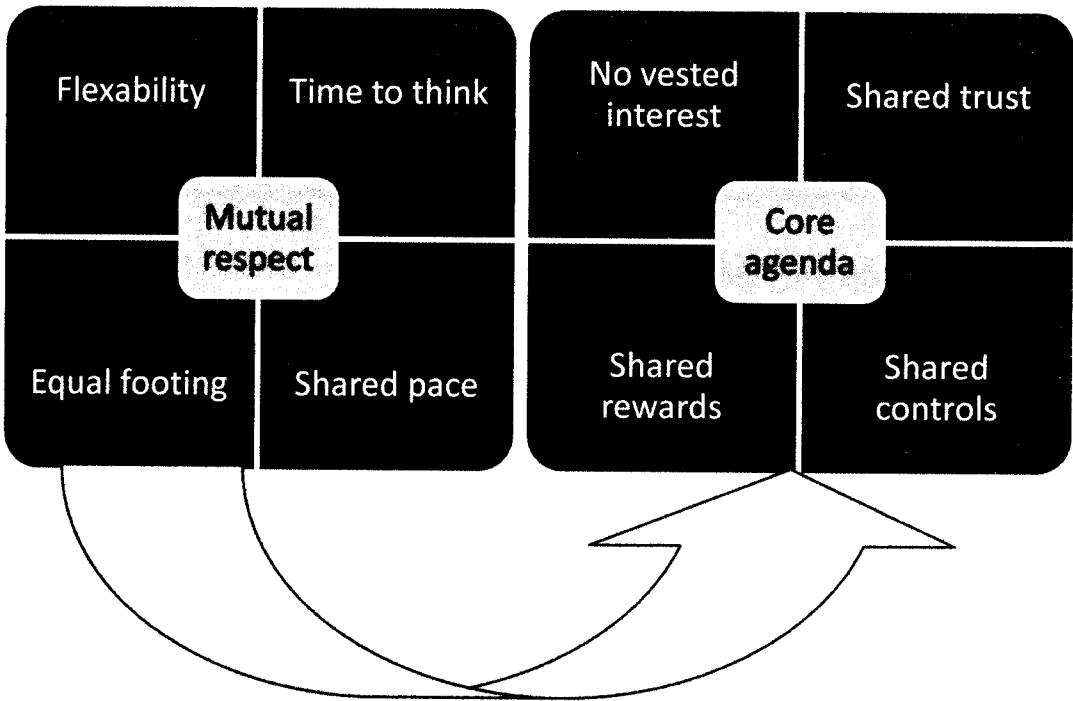
The semi structured interview results from the fourteen interviewees were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to reflect the types of forecasted skills packages (Targeted skills, Standard skills, Focused skills), which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates the types of forecasted skills packages that will least be required, whilst a score of 5 indicates the highest types of forecasted skills packages that will be required.

This chart demonstrates the results of the semi structured interviewees considered views of who should be or the types of Partners in 2020, which will be required, to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (O'Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. .Mintzberg, 1994. Boguslow, 2002. WMC, 2007).



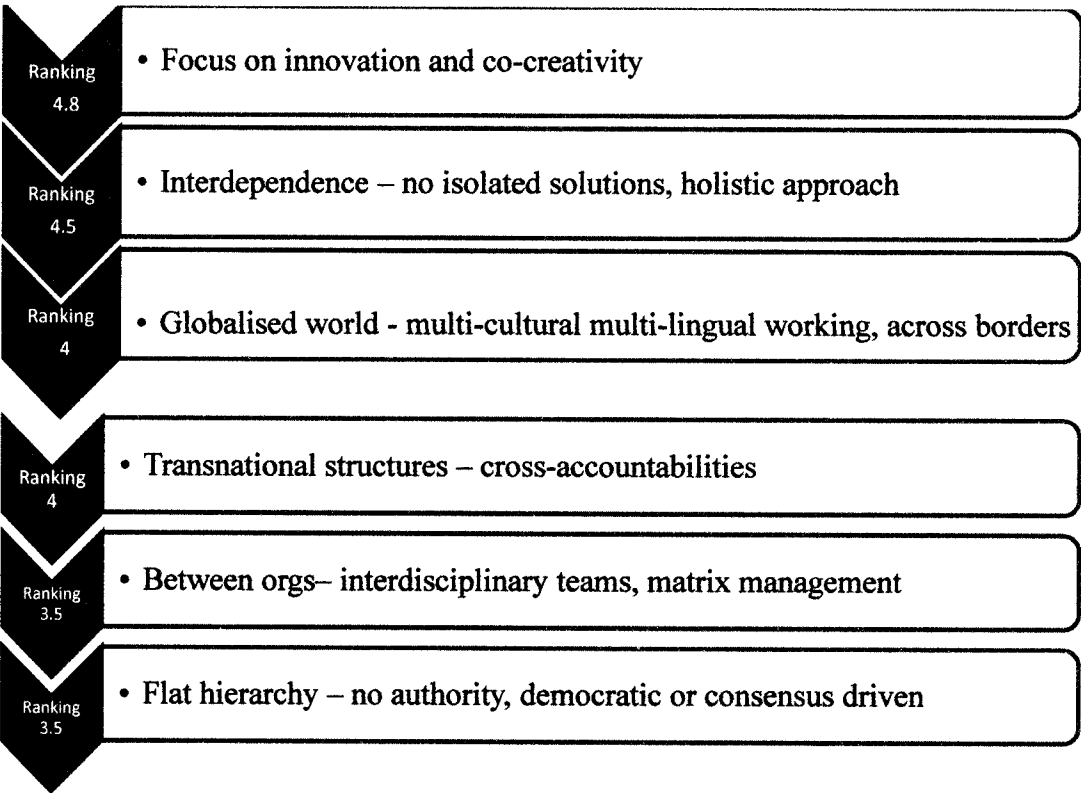
The semi structured interview results from the fourteen interviewees were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to consider who should be or the types of Partners in 2020, which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates that the type Partners considered of low importance, whilst a score of 5 indicates the type of partnership considered in 2020 are of high importance.

This chart demonstrates the results of the semi structured interviewees considered views, of the key elements/drivers that would constitute a strategic enabling partnership, which would be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (O'Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. Mintzberg, 1994. Boguslow, 2002. WMC, 2007).



The semi structured interview results from the fourteen interviewees were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to consider views of the key elements/drivers that would constitute a strategic enabling partnership, which would be required to support the development of knowledge and skills to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates that the elements/driver of a strategic enabling partnership is considered of low importance, whilst a score of 5 indicates the elements/driver of a strategic enabling partnership is of high importance.

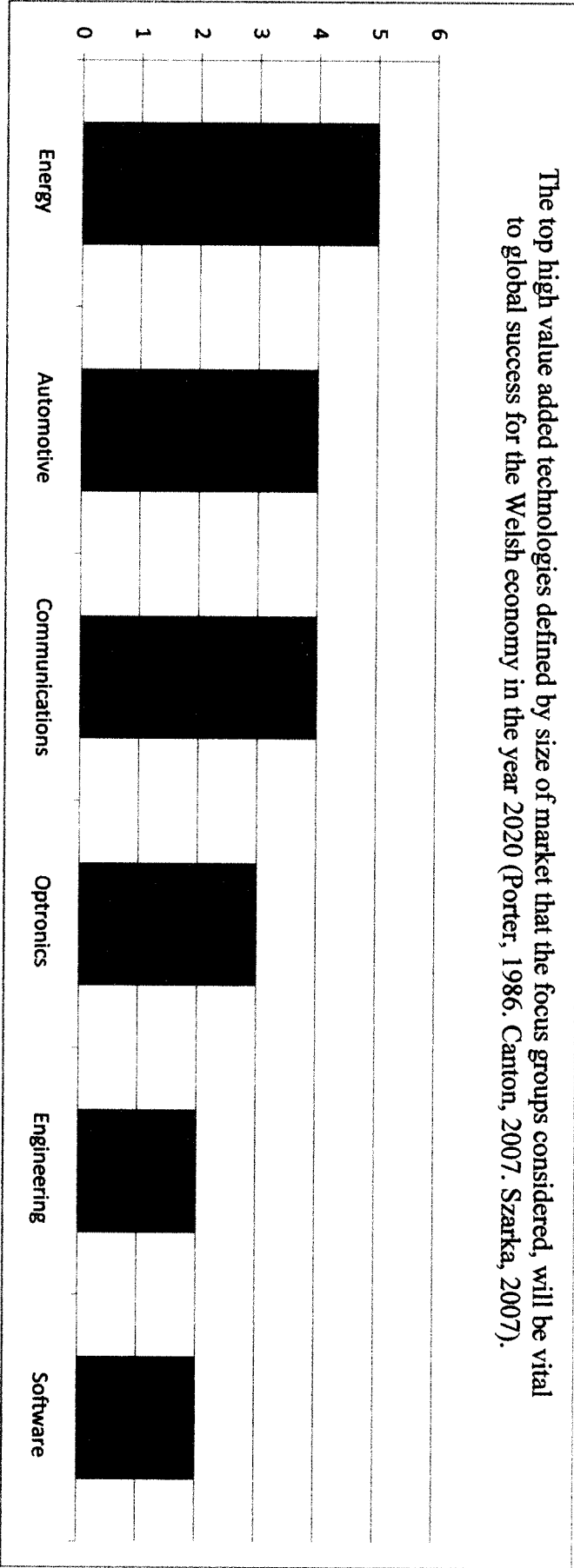
This chart demonstrates the results of the semi structured interviewees considered views ,on partnership and organizational relationships in 2020, which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (O Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. Mintzberg, 1994. Boguslow, 2002. WMC 2007).



The semi structured interview results from the fourteen interviewees were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to consider the partnership and organizational relationships in 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates that the partnership and organizational relationships in 2020 are of low importance, where a score of 5 indicates that the partnership and organizational relationships in 2020, considered in 2020 are of high importance.

5.4 Focus Group Findings

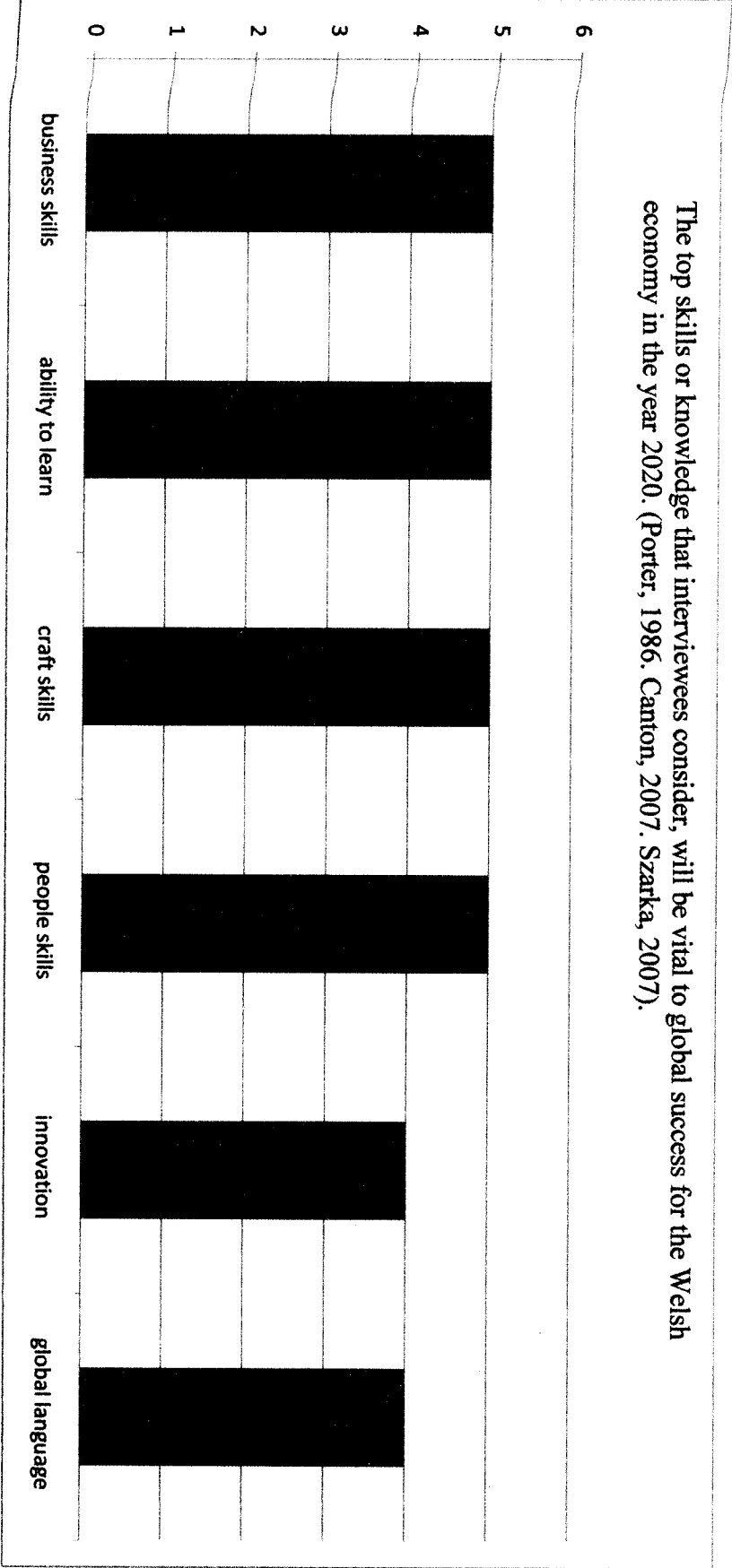
This graph demonstrates the results of the focus groups considered views of the future forecast of the High Value Added Industries, which will be important to economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (Porter, 1986. Canton, 2007. Szarka, 2007).



The focus groups results captured during the discussions from the attendees were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to reflect the likelihood of the industries becoming vital to global success for the Welsh economy in the year 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates that an industry would not be vital at all in the Welsh Economy, whilst a score of 5 indicates the highest probability of the industry being vital to the Welsh Economy.

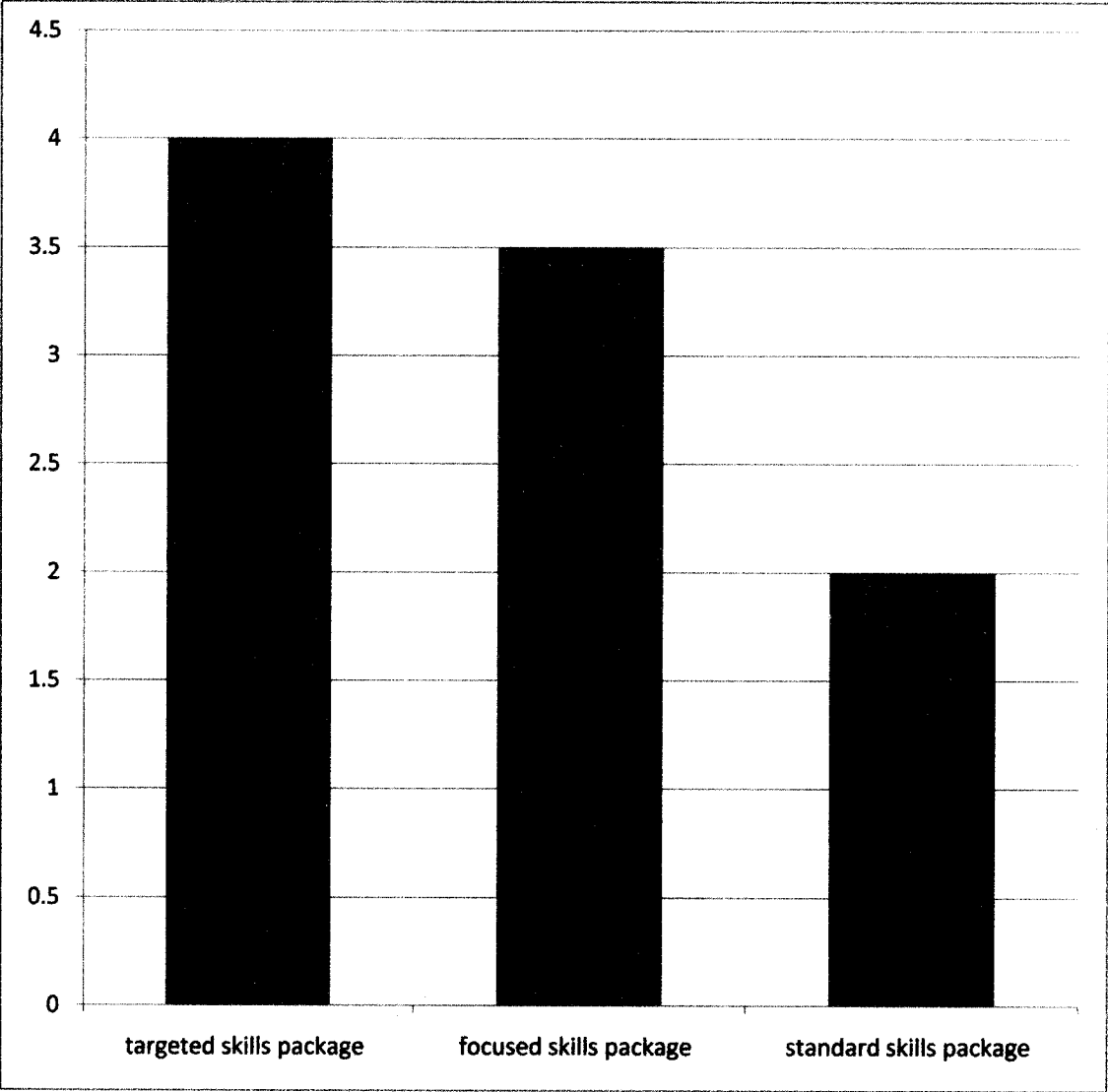
This graph demonstrates the results of the focus groups considered views of the future forecast of the top skills or knowledge, which will be important to economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (Porter, 1986. Canton, 2007. Szarka, 2007).

The top skills or knowledge that interviewees consider, will be vital to global success for the Welsh economy in the year 2020. (Porter, 1986. Canton, 2007. Szarka, 2007).



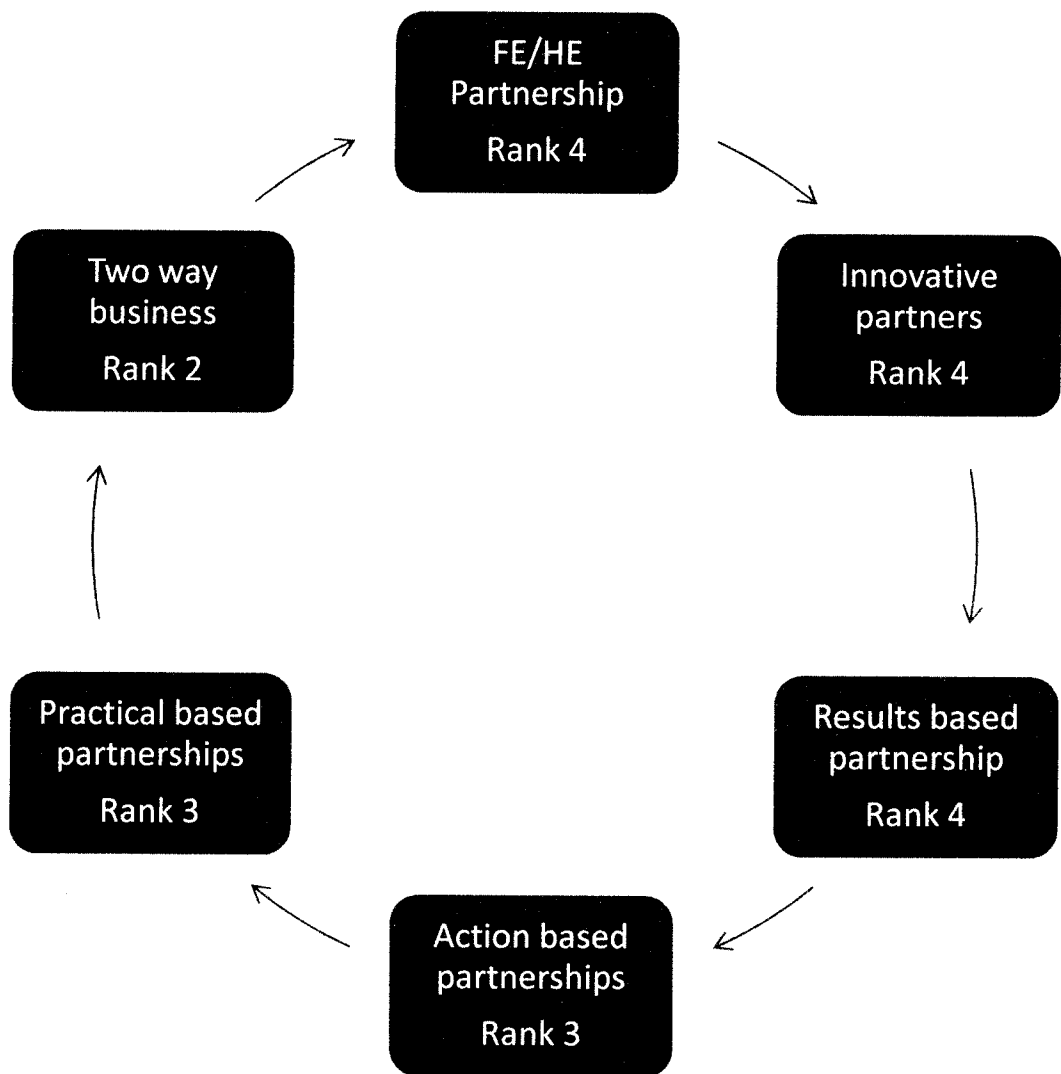
The focus groups results captured during the discussions from the attendees were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to reflect the top skills or knowledge which will be important to economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates the skills or knowledge that would not be vital at all in the Welsh Economy, whilst a score of 5 indicates the highest probability of the skills or knowledge being vital to the Welsh Economy.

This graph demonstrates the results of the focus groups considered views ,of the types of forecasted skills packages (Targeted skills, Standard skills, Focused skills), which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (Porter, 1980. 1996. O ‘Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. .Mintzberg, 1994. Ringwood, 2002).



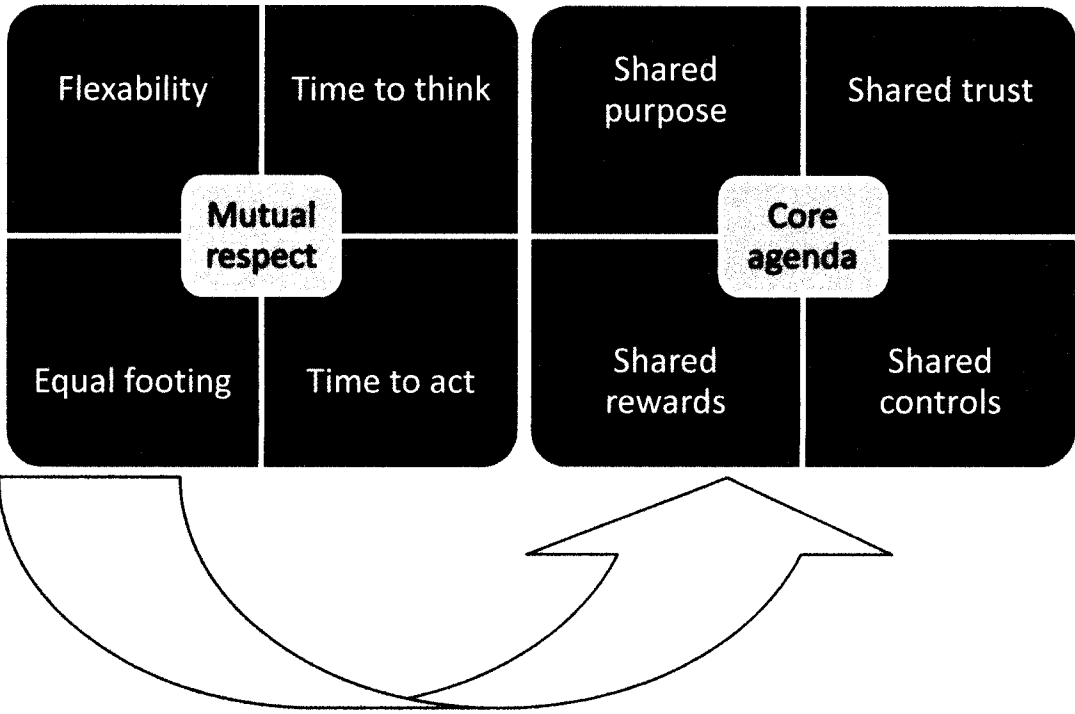
The focus groups results from the fourteen interviewees were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to reflect the types of forecasted skills packages (Targeted skills, Standard skills, Focused skills), which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates the types of forecasted skills packages that will least be required, whilst a score of 5 indicates the highest types of forecasted skills packages that will be required.

This chart demonstrates the results of the focus groups considered views of who should be or the types of Partners in 2020, which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (O Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. Mintzberg, 1994. Boguslow, 2002. WMC, 2007).



The semi structured interview results from the focus groups were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to consider who should be or the types of Partners in 2020, which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates that the type Partners considered of low importance, whilst a score of 5 indicates the type of partnership considered are of high importance.

This chart demonstrates the results of the focus groups considered views of the key elements/drivers that would constitute a strategic enabling partnership, which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (O ‘Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. Mintzberg, 1994. Boguslow, 2002. WMC, 2007).



The semi structured interview results from the fourteen interviewees were collated. The results were analysed and scored from 0 to 5, to consider views of the key elements/drivers would constitute a strategic enabling partnership, which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020. The scoring of 0 indicates that the elements/driver of a strategic enabling partnership are considered of low importance, whilst a score of 5 indicates the elements or driver of a strategic enabling partnership are of high importance.

5.5 Summary

This chapter introduces the results of the research the contemporary thinking developed from the literature review.

The chapter then considers the results against the developed conceptual model

The chapter then considers the results of the actual research undertaken

6 Conclusions and implications

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results and analyses against the research methodology deployed, the questions engaged, and the broad research question.

6.2 Critical evaluation of adopted methodology

The Conceptual model designed and developed, was tested against the literature review, and at every stage of deployment of the agreed methodology. The model was proved to be robust, as each question raised, and the results gained, could be traced back through the developed model, to the literature review.

The semi structured interviews developed from the conceptual model, were then developed to ensure a focus and robustness, ensuring literature focus, but aligned to the key questions to be asked. The interviewees chosen were written to, with clear understanding given regarding, areas such as time, confidentiality and focus. This allowed the semi structured interviewee's the opportunity to raise concerns at any point in the process. No concerns were raised at any point during or after the interviews. The world view that was developed at the start of each of the interviews, has aided the development of the analysis of the results.

The international visit required detailed planning, and initially proved problematic, with identification of the correct and relevant persons to conduct research with. This demonstrated the issue of conducting research across global boundaries. However the core data received, allowed development of the semi structured interviews.

The focus groups were developed with internal support, in areas such as venue, which allowed the author to focus on the development of the key questions and the format of the focus groups. The information at each event was recorded by the author's internal team, and cross checked by the focus group members, so achievement of the correct data was confirmed.

The key issue throughout the research was the academic v business pressures, as some the results were required, by my organization before my expected completion of the academic analysis.

6.3 Conclusions about each research aim

The research question to be considered is the development of a ten year skills strategy, within the High Value Added Manufacturing Sector, in Wales and the North West of England using, partnership management, as a strategic enabler.

After critical consideration, the research undertaken has developed the thinking from the initial areas of research in the 1970s, and the recent research of 2007. This has lead to key areas of potential development, to enable the development of a skills strategy, using partnership management. Using the conceptual model developed, it is clear that business models can be deployed, to develop the strategy required, however within this new models to consider global environmental forces are required , and a new world view of strategic partnership is required.

The research aims in detail are:

To investigate the current approach to strategic direction through relationship management within the developing High Value Added Manufacturing Sector Strategy

The research questions have reviewed and considered the strategic direction models (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Lagrosen, 2007. Golob & Podnar, 2007. Mintzberg, 1978. 1983. 1990. 1994. Burnes, 2004), that drive strategic change, in established organisations to consider a range of environmental considerations, that can develop a position, at which it could defend or influence its strategic position in the market. The critical review of the results has demonstrated that when partners take time to consider the global environmental forecast, it is possible to provide a forecast of strategic direction, that all partners can agree upon (O'Donnell, 2007).

Consideration of the forces of change (Porter, 1980. 1986. Golob & Podnar, 2007), within the research, has demonstrated that that the model is still as relevant today. With the model forming a base in which strategic direction can be reviewed, discussed, and then acted upon.

Consideration of the contemporary research by Canton (2007), demonstrates that the drivers in the forces of change for strategic direction are potentially, Innovation Economy, Talent War, and the Individual within the high value manufacturing regional strategy, and a new element of competitive forces that need to be considered, within strategic direction. The key potentially is to combine Porters (1980.1986), forces of change, with Canton (2007), global change drivers, to provide a new focus in the developing global environment.

This has demonstrated that the new global driving force in strategic direction may be interconnectedness of direction and partnership.

A review of the cost leadership strategy (Porter, 1980. 1996. O' Donnell 2007), has demonstrated that the drive to provide more services for fewer resources, has not delivered the direction and skill level required in the regional area and therefore a new model of strategy is required.

A review of the differentiation strategy (Porter, 1980. 1996. O'Donnell, 2007), has demonstrated some of the possible requirements of a new developing strategy; however it is not forecast to deliver the key advantage required by the partner organisations.

The critical analysis of the segmentation strategy (Porter, 1980. 1996. Mintzberg, 1994. O'Donnell, 2007. Ringland, 2002), has shown, through the results to deliver a competitive advantage of selective standardization on a global basis and may be strategically advantageous in developing a new circle of skills/knowledge required.

A critical review of global strategy (Porter, 1986. Canton, 2007), demonstrates that a global strategy for high value added manufacturing has in fact three basic dimensions: configuration of value-adding activities, co-ordination of the activities across markets, and development of partnership models of delivery linked to globalisation.

The consideration of the global futures strategy developed from Canton (2007), in using an intervention strategy to influence future outcomes, could be developed according to the research, if true and active partnership is achieved.

To understand contemporary thinking on developing long term strategic direction and strategic relationship management.

Within the literature review Mintzberg (1976), considered potential, in consideration of developing a strategic partnership approach, within a changing environment within the new globalised environment. The limitation was that the public sector is traditionally not seen as a dynamic industry (Mintzberg, 1978. 1983. 1990. 1994. Burnes, 2004. Moore & Wen, 2007. Drew, 2006). The research has demonstrated that strategic partnership is a key driver within global environment, and that a dynamic approach is required across all partners. It is therefore possible to consider this within the public sector if the sector, accepts that it will require developing a dynamic partnership approach.

Considering functional strategic partnership management (Boguslaw, 2002. Galbreath, 2006), if the model of global partnership is adopted by all partners, then all partners can have separate aims that complement each other, driven by core agreed principles.

Consideration of the political strategic relationship management (Eagan, 1998), and the collaborative approach to developing services by strategic partnership of Andrews & Martin (2007), against the analysis of the results, demonstrates that the developing contemporary research is correct, in that a model of cooperation if developed fully, could enhance global partnership.

Strategic partnership at the heart of strategic direction (Porter, 1980. 1986. Szarka, 2007), within the research has been demonstrated as key part of developing a viable business community that can remain competitive in a global context, if the correct models of partnership can be adapted by all partners including the public sector.

Development of consideration of the framework of value for money within the public sector , appears from the results appears to be an excuse made by policy

makers for not engaging in developing true partnership, where as the research has demonstrated that this is not a concern for all the other partners involved (Dunn, 2000. Rom, 2000. Rosenau, 2000. Sparer, 2000. Wohlstetter, Malloy, Smith & Hentschke, 2004b).

Trust-based collaboration (Andriof & Waddock, 2002), developed into strategic competitive advantage, or achieving strategic advantage by partnership (Andrews & Martin, 2007. Foo, 2007), can be considered to be at the heart of the analysis, of the research questions, in that all the evidence collated, points towards a partnership model if developed correctly, directly relating to sustained economic growth.

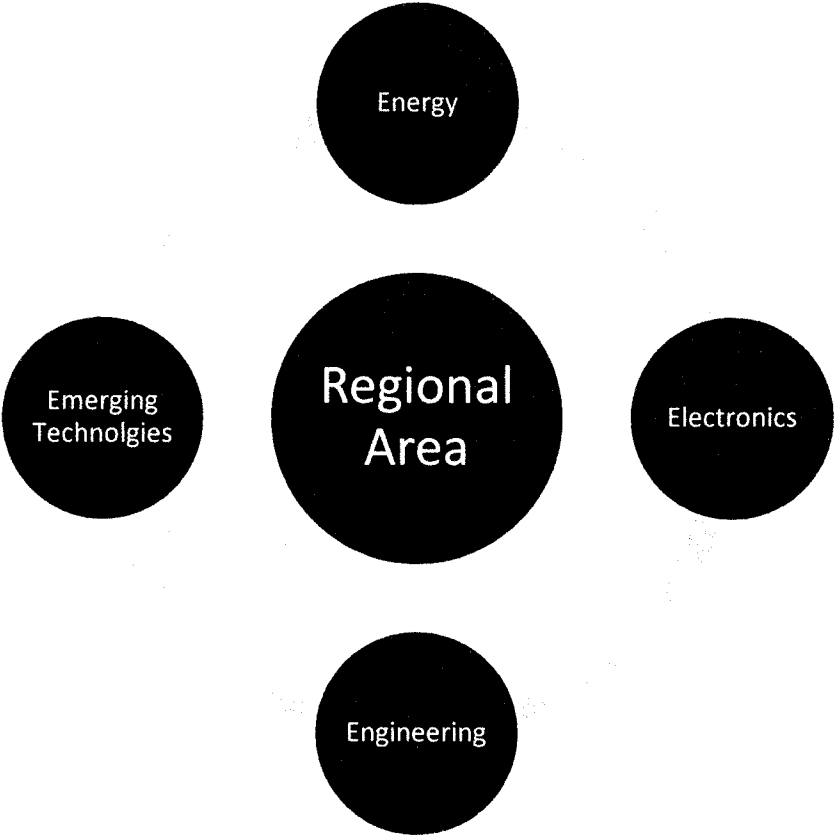
The contemporary thinking by the Wales Management Council (2007), on developing a model of Partnership Trends/Relationships in future, when analysed against the results, demonstrates that the key drivers are globalised, world innovation, and interdependence, in developing partnerships in the other areas of their thinking, such as flat hierarchy which was not seen as being important in the development of partnership relationships.

The critical review by Ringland (2002), on strategic direction, that public services are driven by globalisation, emerging technologies and interconnectedness, is clearly demonstrated in the results, with interconnectedness, becoming a key driving force in strategic direction.

6.4 Conclusions about each research question

The semi structured interviewees and focus groups considered views of the future forecast of the High Value Added Industries, which will be important to economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (Porter, 1986. Canton, 2007. Szarka, 2007).

After analysis of the results from the semi structured interviews and the focus groups, a clear strategic model for developing a new and expanded industry base, in the following sectors Energy, Electronics, Enabling Technologies (Optronics, Composites and Communications), Engineering (The 4 E's strategy) based on global environmental evidence should be considered (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Lagrosen, 2007. Golob & Podnar, 2007). This would look to position the regional area as a major force within the UK and worldwide by 2020, taking into account the developing environmental factors such as globalisation (O'Donnell 2007), and allow the regional area to strengthen its position with the world market, based on a strategy of enabling technology sectors within the High Value Added Manufacturing Sector (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Beaver, 2007).

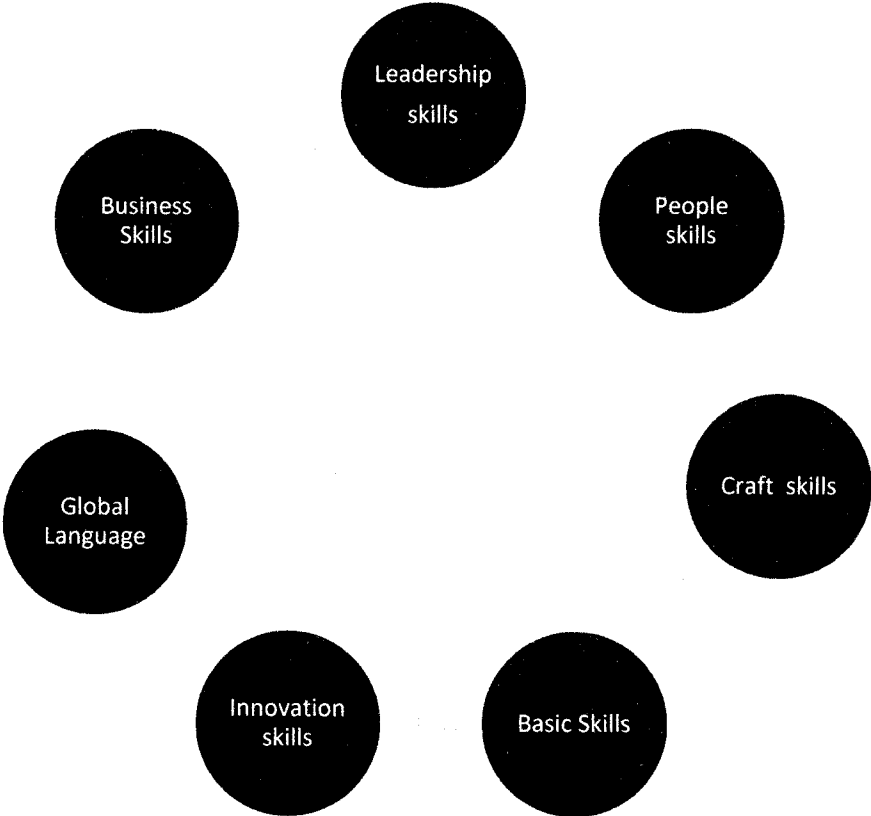


The 4 E model (Martin, 2008).

The semi structured interviewees and focus groups considered views of the future forecast of the top skills or knowledge, which will be important to economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (Porter, 1986. Canton, 2007. Szarka, 2007).

After analysis of the results from the semi structured interviews and the focus groups, the regional area in order to support the development of the 4 E economic strategy by 2020, (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Beaver, 2007), requires the employees of the future in the region, to have the following key skills or knowledge, Craft, Basic Skills (Reasoning, Ability to Learn, Information Technology), Innovation, Global Language, Business Skills (Canton, 2007). In addition it requires development of senior management in Leadership and People management skills. This aligns with contemporary research of Canton (2007), and Porter (1989. 1996), that regions should consider the competitive forces of individuals within global strategic direction. Within this a circle of knowledge can therefore be developed, within both the overall regional delivery of skills required, and the businesses engaged within the process. Therefore if the region is fully engaged in developing a new economic strategy, it needs to develop strategic circle of knowledge, which is common to all High value added industries.

Potential Regional and Business Circle of Knowledge in 2020



The semi structured interviewees and focus groups considered views of the current skills or knowledge of, which currently employed staff in 2007 have in Wales (Porter, 1986. Canton, 2007. Szarka, 2007).

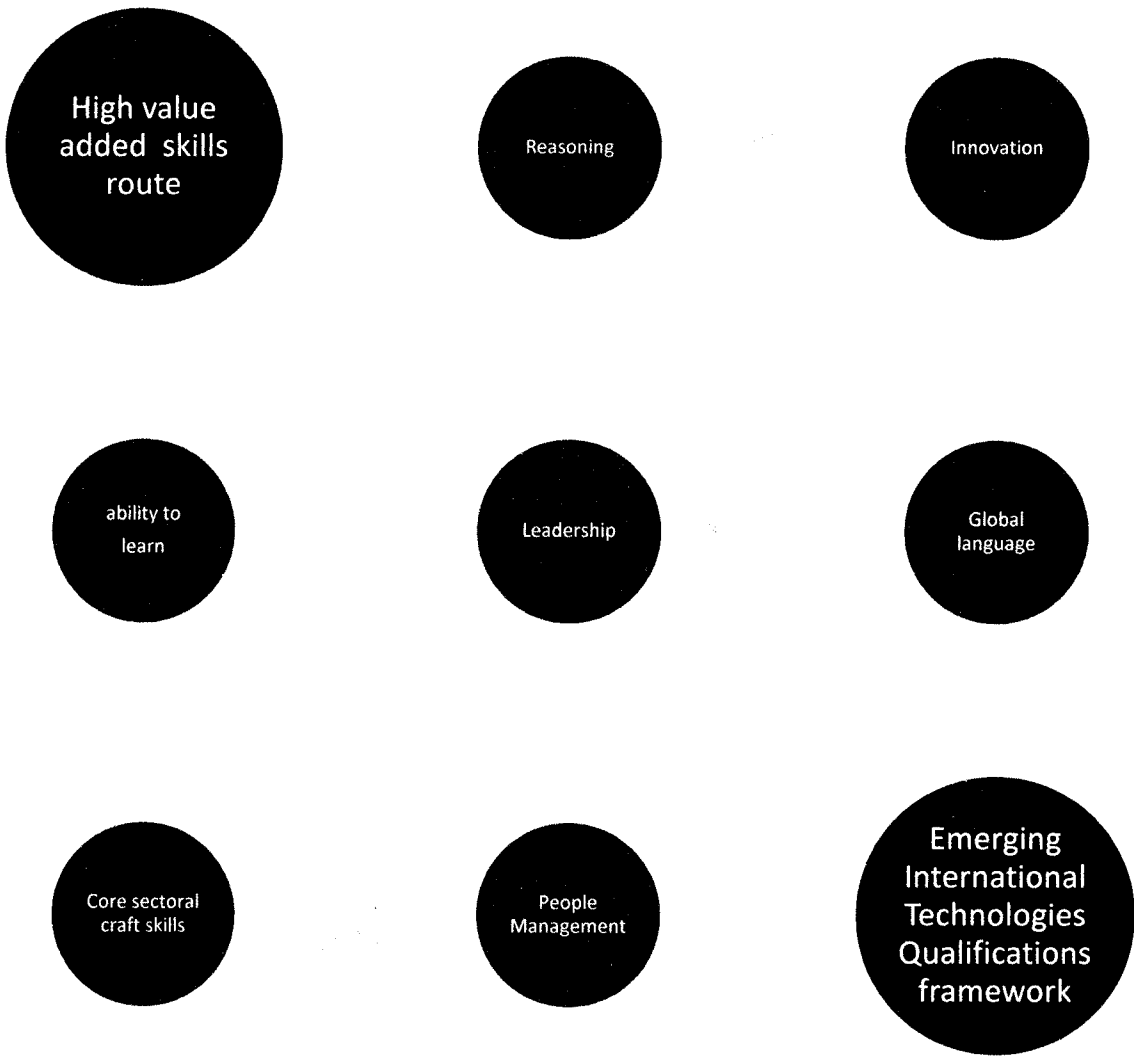
After analysis of the results from the semi structured interviews and the focus groups, the current skills levels in 2007, are clearly lacking in the current workforce, to develop a 4 E economic strategy by 2020 (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Beaver, 2007). The current levels of Craft, Basic Skills (Reasoning, Ability to Learn), and Innovation, people management are considered as poor. Whilst the current skill levels of Leadership and Information Technology are low to medium, in the current workforce. Therefore unless a clear strategy of skills packages are developed, to support the current workforce, then the consideration of competitive forces of individuals within the global environment (Canton, 2007. Porter, 1980. 1986), will mean that the 4 E strategy will fail. The circle of current knowledge in 2007, upon critical reflection against the future circle of knowledge forecast in 2020, reflects the overall concerns of the research question, in that at present Wales cannot respond to a developing economy due to an incorrect or weak skills base.

The semi structured interviewees and focus groups considered views of the types of forecasted skills packages (Targeted skills, Standard skills, Focused skills), which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth, in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (Porter, 1980. 1996. O'Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. Mintzberg, 1994. Ringwood, 2000).

After analysis of the results from the semi structured interviews and the focus groups, it is clear that the current standard skills package offered (cost leadership strategy), is not the strategy to follow into future skills development, in order to deliver the 4 E economic strategy by 2020 (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Beaver, 2007). This is due to the evidence gained after critical analysis of the circle of knowledge required in 2020, compared to the current circle of knowledge developed over the past ten years. In addition a focused skills strategy or differentiation strategy (Porter, 1980. 1996), whilst being seen as potentially important, is not forecast to deliver the high results that are required. The targeted or segmentation skills strategy (Porter, 1980. 1986) is forecasted to deliver the skill requirements through considering a strategically advantageous skills package on a global environmental model targeted to local requirements. The targeted or segmentation skills strategy links directly into environmental considerations to support the development of workforce skills that will deliver the 4 E economic strategies by 2020 (Mintzberg, 1994. O'Donnell, 2007. Ringland, 2002), if delivered through partnership.

In addition, the targeted or segmentation skills strategy delivered regionally could put the key skills/knowledge required by 2020 into the heart of the developed curriculum, so ensuring that core areas are developed at all levels. This model has been developed by adapting the conceptual relevance tree model (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007. Fisher, 2007), into a strategic development model (Martin & Palmer, 2008), where relevance and clarity, can be demonstrated against strategic goals.

Targeted learning and qualification framework, containing core elements of
targeted skills strategy



(Martin & Palmer, 2008).

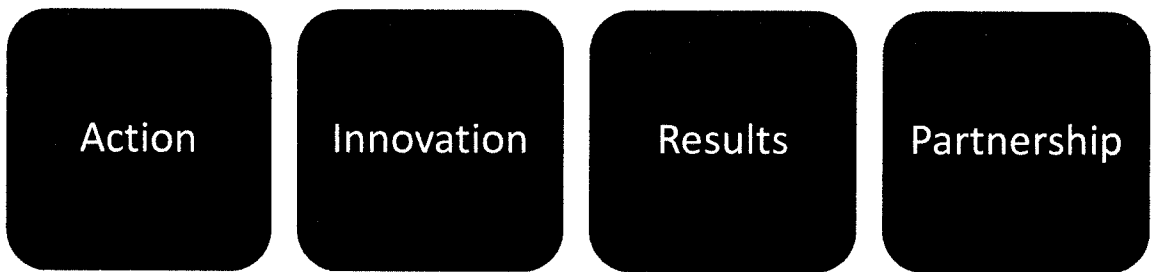
The semi structured interviewees and focus groups, considered views of the types of Partnership Trends/Relationships in 2020, which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (O'Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. Mintzberg, 1994. Boguslow, 2002. WMC, 2007).

After analysis of the results from the semi structured interviews and the focus groups, it is clear that the Welsh economy will only transform and support its goals in 2020, if it adopts and fully embraces the concept of real partnership. This should be through a developed strategic partnership model, which builds on the work of Andrews & Martin (2007), Szarka (2007), regarding collaboration, and is grounded in the work of Porter (1980. 1986). This would then allow a framework, for employees of business to engage with Universities or colleges, with a joint future vision, of competitive advantage, through a viable business community, and a highly responsive education sector.

The semi structured interviewees and focus groups considered views of who should be or the types of Partners in 2020, which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (O Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. Mintzberg, 1994. Boguslow, 2002. WMC, 2007).

After analysis of the results from the semi structured interviews and the focus groups, it is clear that there are three key types of partners that will be required to support the development of the 4 E regional strategy (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Lagrosen, 2007. Golob & Podnar ,2007). The types of partners/partnerships that are required to be developed would be results based, action based, and innovative, building on the work of Ringland (2002), to develop interconnectedness between business and education, in a dynamic global environment. The model of partnership could be then developed, to include these elements as key building blocks, to implement the Targeted skills strategy.

Model of Action, Innovation and Results (AIR) in 2020 to develop Strategic Partnership



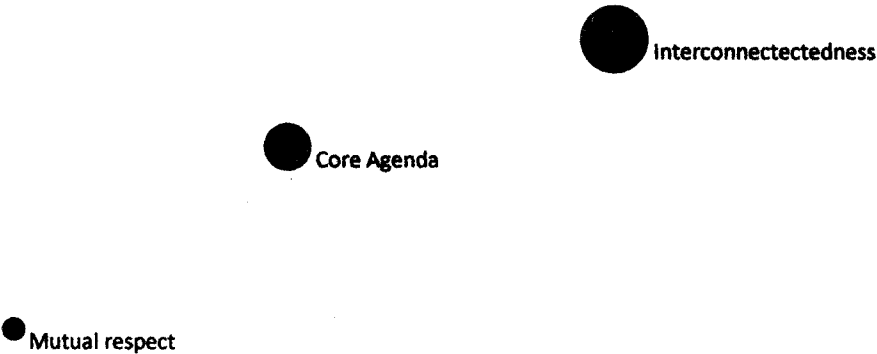
The semi structured interviewees and focus groups considered views of the key elements / drivers that would constitute a strategic enabling partnership, which would be required to support the development of knowledge and skills to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (O Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007 .Mintzberg, 1994. Boguslow, 2002. WMC, 2007).

After analysis of the results from the semi structured interviews and the focus groups, the elements/drivers of a strategic enabling partnership, can be split into key areas, Mutual respect and Core agenda.

The core agenda would be one of shared purpose, trust, rewards, and controls. The mutual respect agenda would be of time to think, time to act, flexibility and equality. However it is clear that they are interlinked, and therefore without developing all areas, the key drivers would not operate within a partnership.

Within the contemporary thinking, the core drivers have not been developed fully, however together they support the developments considered by Ringland (2002), regarding interconnectedness, and Szarka (2007), in considering strategic partnership. Therefore a model could be developed that puts core values at the heart of strategic partnership.

Model of Mutual Respect, Core Agenda and Interconnectedness (M.C.I.)

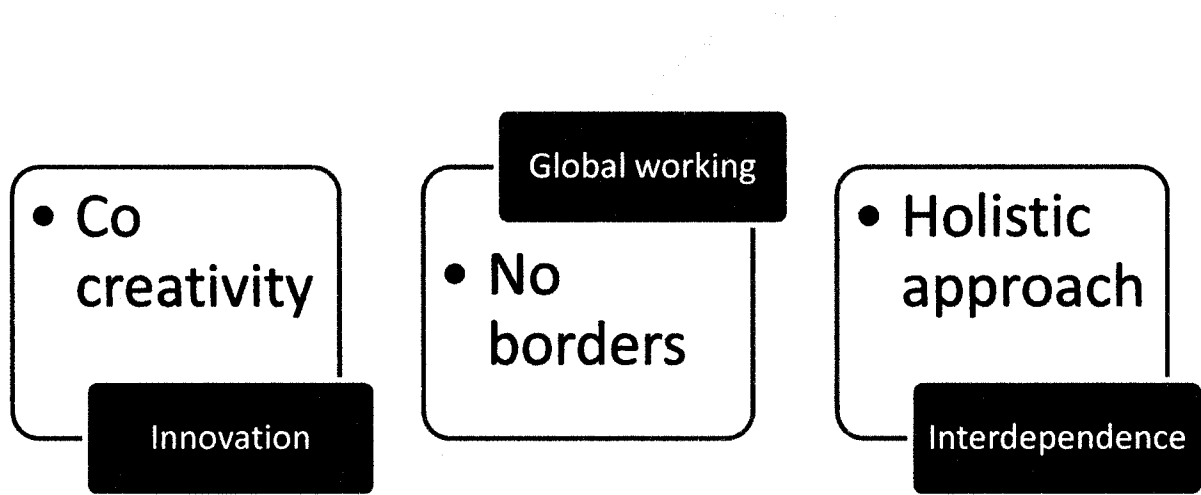


The semi structured interviewees and focus groups considered views on partnership and organizational relationships in 2020, which will be required to support the development of knowledge and skills, to support economic growth in the Welsh Economy by 2020 (O' Donnell, 2007. Andrews & Martin, 2007. Mintzberg, 1994. Boguslow, 2002. WMC 2007).

After analysis of the results from the semi structured interviews and the focus groups, it is clear that three clear themes emerged, focus on innovation and co-creativity, interdependence and global working. This links directly into Boguslaw (2002), and how partners may align themselves to develop new relationships.

The partnership relationships to be developed therefore needs to consider key forces, that can drive strategic partnership (Rugman & Hodgetts, 2003), and develop an overall model of interconnectedness. This can be developed into a model of Global, Innovation, and Interdependence (G2i), which requires development of core components based on mutual trust and innovation.

Relationship Model of G2i in 2020



6.5 Overall Conclusions

The research undertaken against the developed conceptual model has demonstrated that in an ever changing global environment, it is possible to develop a strategic model of practice that supports economic growth. However within this consideration, the development of strategic delivery models is required.

Scenarios of future forecasting

When considering strategic direction models (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Lagrosen, 2007. Golob & Podnar, 2007. Mintzberg, 1978. 1983. 1990. 1994. Burnes, 2004), my analysis of the research has concluded that by understanding the existing forces of change locally, and then by consideration of the global environmental change factors, it is possible for the regional area to develop a number of scenarios of future forecasting.

The development of scenarios of economic forecasting, or skills forecasting in the regional area, would then allow the development of a strategic position globally, which would then position the regional area into a position of global environmental strength, which could drive the regional forward into 2020 and beyond (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Beaver, 2007).

The model of strategic environmental global forecasting, or the Four E strategy, demonstrates that it is possible to develop a model of economic development that can be translated into actual business development, at a local business level.

This can then be supported by the development of a circle of skills global forecasting model, which allows local strategies to be driven by global environmental factors.

The critical conclusion however is that each model is interdependent for a global strategic position to be adopted, and without adoption of an economic global forecasting model and skills global forecasting model, the regional area would be at greater risk of a global environmental change affecting the area, in a negative spiral of locally driven environmental factors, which would potentially then drive both local economy and the skills gap into a non control position (O'Donnell, 2007).

Competitive forces of environmental change

After critical review, it is clear that in the ever changing global environment, that models are required to understand, consider, and react to the forces of competitive change. The key difference in the current models of global forecasting is the time response required to the forces of change, in that unless a competitive force model is reactive, then the environmental effects can be felt by the local environment, before complete understanding is agreed by the models. The work of Porter, Mintzberg and contemporary authors (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Lagrosen, 2007. Golob & Podnar 2007. Mintzberg, 1978. 1983. 1990. 1994. Burnes, 2004), has developed the considerations of forces of change, however further research is required to develop a global model of environmental forces of change, that could be adopted by a range of countries, which would develop common benchmarking locally, and then solutions that could be adopted in a manner which adapts to fast moving global environmental change.

Strategic Partnership

Within the research undertaken current contemporary thinking on strategic partnership has been challenged, to consider the requirement further of understanding of what constitutes a real strategic partnership. The key area of interconnectedness proposed (Ringland, 2002. Szarka, 2007), can be developed integrating innovation and co-creativity, interdependence and global working (Boguslaw, 2002). Therefore a model could be developed that puts an aligned values at the heart of strategic partnership. In order however for that developing model to be effective, it is also necessary to consider the key forces of partnership (Rugman & Hodgetts, 2003), of Global, Innovation, and Interdependence (G2i).

The strategic partnership model therefore needs to develop into a model of dynamic equilibrium that contains the key elements of strategic partnership, but constrained within a dynamic force of interconnectedness.

Global Skills Development

The critical review undertaken considering the development of an economic strategy, and the forces of environmental change (Porter, 1980. 1986. Thomas, 2007. Beaver, 2007), has led to the developing understanding that the work by Canton (2007), of the competitive forces of individuals, can be developed further. In that an individual person's choice in their skills development could lead to an environmental change in skills development that could have a major impact on the developing economic strategy. Therefore within a local environmental area the development of the circle of knowledge/skills required is key for planners to understand the economic impact this may have.

Further consideration of developing the basic footprint of the circle of knowledge /skills required, should therefore be considered against the developing environmental forces of change in the regional area. In addition this could be linked to an extended view of global consideration, and then it may be that the impact of global environmental change could be migrated.

6.6 Limitations of study

The study has been limited in its scope, in that it has taken a snap shot in time and views of individuals in a particular timeframe that may have been influenced by the local or global environment.

The sample size taken, although robust in its coverage of the business, education and global environment, could have been expanded to include a number of further key partners.

6.7 Opportunities for further research

Within the developing considerations of contemporary research, there is a clear requirement to develop strategic direction and partnership considerations within a global environment. This research has demonstrated that new models of global direction, investment and environment will affect local businesses and education partnerships, and that further research is required to develop and understand both long term forecasting models for economic growth, and for developing strategic partnership models to react to this environment.

7 Recommendations

Scenarios of future forecasting

To counter the global environmental changes at a regional level, I would recommend that a global future forecasting (GFF) model is developed, with a clear remit to benchmark each year the regional area globally, against the agreed 10 year forecasts clear and defined hard objective measures (Porter, 1980. 1986). The GFF could then advise the development and implementation of a joint skills and economic forecasting model that considers recommendations to changes in strategic trends in both areas of global business investment and global skill requirements that would enhance understanding of planning and local delivery taking into account global environmental trends.

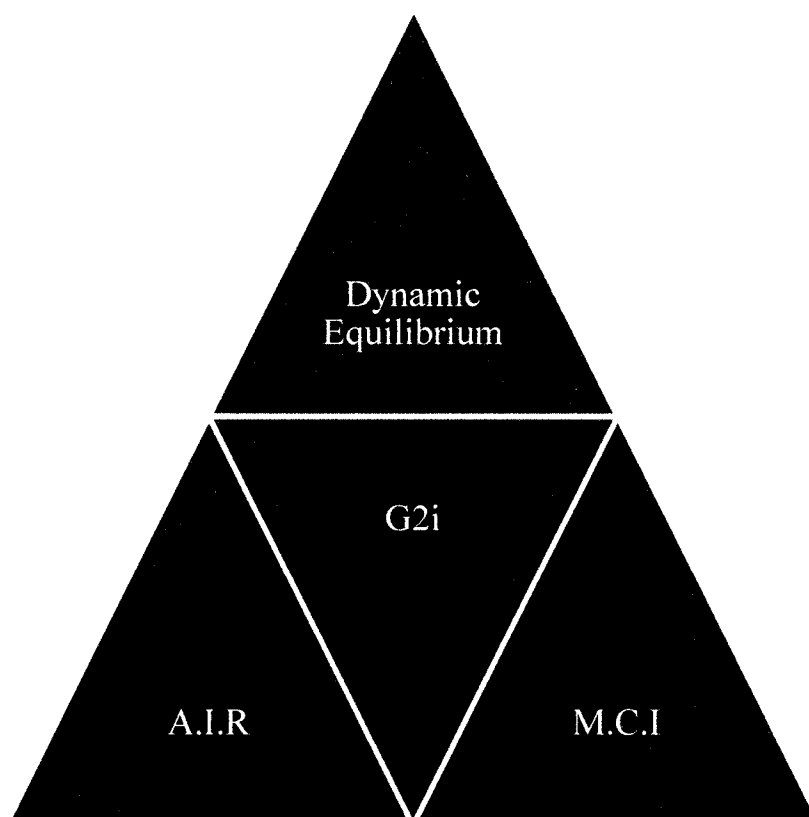
Competitive forces of environmental change

I would recommend that research of developing a common international model of global environmental change is required, where agreed international standards of measurement of global change could be developed. This research could be then developed into local forecasting for government and businesses, in planning economic and people development.

Strategic Partnership

The development and implementation of a dynamic equilibrium partnership model, within all partnerships in business and education, within the High Value Added Manufacturing Sector in Wales, and the North West of England, should be introduced at the earliest opportunity, and should be a pre requirement of strategic investment by Government bodies into the emerging sector.

Dynamic Equilibrium Partnership Model



Partnership Area	Acronym	Definition
Partnership Type	A.I.R	Action, Innovation, Results
Partnership Elements/ Drivers	M.C.I	Mutual Respect, Core Agenda, Interconnectedness
Partnership Relationships	G2i	Global working, Innovation, Interdependence

(Martin, 2008).

The development of the Dynamic Equilibrium Partnership model (DE), demonstrates a model of partnership that has three core elements, based on developing an equilibrium of forces, that once interlocked, balance and complement each other, that then allows each partner to be dynamic in their own area of expertise, in an environment of trust based partnership. A key feature of the DE model is that each partner must have the principles or sign up to the principles of A.I.R, M.C.I. and G2i, otherwise the partnership will not function in a high performing dynamic manner, and the balance of equilibrium which drives the model will not be achieved.

The DE model could be used as developing business/learning/education partnerships in structured development, to develop dynamic growth, within the partnership.

In addition it could develop individuals to form partnerships/relationships based on the core elements internally or externally, to support organizational growth.

This would allow the development of high value added skills in partnership within the public sector, to respond to the challenge of adding value through partnership, but in a measured manner

Global Skills Development

I would recommend the development of a global skills circle of knowledge model, which is the key to offsetting the global environmental changes. The model should agree between six to nine of the top skills/knowledge required balanced against current local skill levels, and the global environmental forces of change. This model should be benchmarked yearly to plot trends, locally and globally.

This model should be implemented within key public sector planning models, and consideration should be given to developing a global government led circle of knowledge planning tool.

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Appendix 1

Interviews undertaken

Chair of Welsh Automotive Forum. *(150 key businesses, approx 70,000 employees).*

Head of Apprentice Training Airbus. *(Approx 6000 employees in Wales, 57,000 employees globally).*

Head of Training Airbus UK. *(Approx 6000 employees in Wales, 57,000 employees globally).*

Deputy Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies. *(Director Fast Growth 50 and the management boards of IOD Wales and Encounter, the British-Irish policy think tank).*

Head of Business Skills and Employability Welsh Assembly Government. *(Responsible for strategic management of WAG policy and strategy in the skills environment, budget accountability £170M).*

Head of Marketing and Research Welsh Assembly Government. *(Responsible for strategic marketing and research of WAG policy and strategy in Education and Skills).*

Managing Director IMC. *(Business employing 80 staff, in manufacturing bespoke products, Turnover £5m).*

Production Director IMC. *(Business employing 80 staff, in manufacturing bespoke products, Turnover £5m).*

Strategic Director Sharp UK. *(Business employing 550 staff in Wales, and part of global development in new and emerging technologies, 68,000 employees globally).*

School Leadership Director *(Responsible for developing schools leadership in North East Wales).* Professor of Innovation. North East Wales Institute. *(Responsible for new developments within University of Wales in engineering and business).*

Professor of Business and Management. North East Wales Institute. *(Responsible for new developments within University of Wales in engineering and business).*

Professor of Management/Director of Graduate Programs. Abu Dhabi University. *(Responsible for strategic direction of eleven universities in Middle East).*

Managing director, CED Projects, Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation. Canada *(Responsible for emerging technology developments).*

The following were attendees at the focus groups:

Partners and providers

Head of National Strategy Sector Skills Council for Engineering. *(Covering an employer footprint of over 100,000 businesses).*

Head of Learning, Deeside College *(Rated as best college in UK, by Estyn).*

EU Project Manager. Deeside College. *(Rated as best college in UK, by Estyn)*

Managing Director. Optic Techium. *(Responsible for developing emerging technologies and businesses through research).*

Research Director. IKC. *(Partnership of Cranfield University, University College London, Cambridge and Optic).*

Manager for Economic Development. *(Wrexham Local Authority).*

Skills Manager for Economic Development. *(Wrexham Local Authority).*

Manager for Economic Development. *(Ellesmere Port Local Authority).*

Director of Learning. Learning to Inspire. *(Private training provider).*

Managing Director. Howard Grey associates. *(Private training provider).*